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Hanieh Molana, Deirdre Conlon, Jennifer L. Fluri and Nancy Hiemstra

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Conference Organizing in the Hybrid Age: Lessons from the Fourth International Feminist Geography Conference

Hanieh Molana
California State University, USA

Deirdre Conlon
University of Leeds, UK

Jennifer L. Fluri
University of Colorado, USA

Nancy Hiemstra
Stony Brook University, USA

The 4th International Feminist Geography Conference, Pushing Boundaries, was held both virtually and in person at the University of Colorado at Boulder, 15–17 June 2022. The goal of the conference was to bring together feminist geographers from around the world to share their work, exchange ideas, and build professional connections toward advancing feminist scholarship. In this article, four of the conference organizers come together to share their experiences with the process of organizing a feminist conference and the lessons learned along the way, as well as at each stage of planning. Our intended audience is people who have not previously organized a hybrid conference (as we had not). By discussing and addressing the challenges and recommendations—including, but not limited to conference format, scheduling, budget, technical support, social media, and timeline—we aim to foster more opportunities for organizing inclusive hybrid conferences in the future. **Key Words: conference planning, feminist geography, feminist scholarship, hybrid conference.**

The Fourth International Feminist Geography Conference took place in June 2022. This conference, like three previous conferences in 2014, 2017, and 2018, was initiated and organized entirely by volunteers in the subdiscipline of feminist geography. In the spring of 2021, Jennifer Fluri and Amy Trauger took the lead in planning this fourth conference and met with organizers from the 2017 event. Seeking to bring together a diversity of feminist geographers from different identity categories (race, gender, sexuality, and class), locations, educational and professional experiences, and career stages, Fluri and Trauger recruited committee members through various subdiscipline listservs, social media, and personal outreach, and the first organizing committee meeting took place in June 2021.

The conference was an enormous success, with three in-person locations at Boulder, Colorado; Kandbari, India; and Durham, UK, as well as virtual participation across multiple time zones. Out of 500 people who registered for the conference, more than 300 actively participated during the live event, making the total number of participants far larger than the three previous feminist geography conferences, each having approximately 100 participants. Of the approximately 200 registrants who did not

participate during the conference, anecdotal evidence shows that many engaged with recorded individual papers and sessions before and after the conference. There were a total of seventy-four sessions (thirty-nine paper sessions, twenty-two panels, and thirteen workshops) as well as a digital networking session each day. In-person participation included fifty-nine individuals in the United States, fifteen in India, and thirty in Durham. The conference was the result of a collaborative effort among twenty-five feminist scholars across five continents whose time, skills, commitment, and guidance contributed to this successful effort. We believe it is important to name the individuals who formed the conference planning committee. They are Annie Bartos, Nazgol Bhageri, Emily Billo, Brenda Boonabaana, Tianna Bruno, Martina Carretta, Kate Coddington, Rachel Colls, Deirdre Conlon, Anindita Datta, Caroline Faria, Jennifer Fluri, Nancy Hiemstra, Kaily Heitz, Sarah Klosterkamp, Patricia Lopez, Zoe Meletis, Hanieh Molana, Nadia Mosquera Muriel, Victoria Ogoegbunam Okoye, Anu Sabhlok, Amy Trauger, Jill Williams, Nancy Worth, and Sofia Zaragocin Carvajal. The conference also drew on labor, both paid and unpaid, of several graduate students including roving reporters

Yolanda Weima and Aila Bandagi Kandlakunta and graduate student assistants from the University of Colorado, Boulder: Neda Shaban, Ben Barron, Gabriella Subia Smith, and Sarah Posner.

Virtual meeting modalities had been slowly gaining in popularity among academics in the last two decades, but the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly made them, for more than a year, the only way to conduct a conference. Some studies suggest that a fully virtual environment can negatively affect interaction and engagement between attendees and decrease opportunities—especially for early-career scholars—to build professional networks, foster future collaboration, and be mentored (Ahn et al. 2021). Most scholars conclude, however, that the advantages of virtual and hybrid conferencing greatly outweigh the disadvantages. Virtual conferencing might be preferable to potential attendees for a variety of reasons: They eliminate personal or political barriers, including health concerns, caregiving responsibilities, cost of traveling, and visa restrictions (Mair and Thompson 2009; Nevins 2014; Parsons 2015; Fraser et al. 2017; Estien et al. 2021). In the face of the climate crisis and the increase in CO_2 emissions globally, geographers have long called for centering the environment and social justice in our contemporary academic practices (Nevins 2014; Garcia 2022; Olson 2022). The climate crisis will not end solely by reducing our carbon emissions; recognizing the ways that traditional conferences perpetuate colonial power relations between the Global North and Global South is a necessary consideration as well (García 2022; Hunt 2022; Martin 2022; Olson 2022.). Virtual conferences facilitate participation by groups often marginalized from international academic conference settings such as people with disabilities; Black, Indigeneous, and people of color (BIPOC) scholars; people geographically distant from a conference location; and junior scholars. Thus, they can create and support a more inclusive culture in academic communities (Kelly et al. 2020; Ahn et al. 2021; Estien et al. 2021). Additionally, alternative forms of conferencing have the potential to challenge the neoliberalization of academia, the privatization of academic space, and the commodification of knowledge (Martin 2022).

Recognizing that virtual and hybrid conferences are here to stay, this short article, written by four members of the organizing committee, discusses practical considerations, insights, and steps for putting on a hybrid academic conference. Our intended audience is people who have not previously organized a hybrid conference, as we had not. By sharing some of the practical challenges and lessons learned throughout our experience of organizing the Fourth International Feminist Geography conference, we aim to foster more opportunities for inclusive hybrid conferences in the future. The following sections focus on five themes: (1) budget and funding; (2) technology, equipment, and hybrid format; (3) advertising, networking and keynote; (4) organization and timelines; and (5) final reflections.

Budget and Funding

Contrary to our initial assumptions as inexperienced conference planners, a hybrid conference costs significantly more than an all in-person conference with fewer participants. The final total cost for more than 300 participants (virtual and in person) plus 200 registrations on the conference platform was over $50,000. The costs for virtual conferencing technology, including interfacing with the in-person sites, accounted for over half of the total conference budget (Table 1).

The budget and funding subcommittee sought conference funding from a variety of sources. A grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) provided over 60 percent of the total costs. The committee began writing a conference grant proposal in summer 2021 and submitted it to NSF in November 2021. The NSF grant provided the bulk of the conference funding, but it became clear that additional funds were needed after the technology subcommittee determined costs of the virtual platform, equipment, and technology support. The fundraising committee also reached out to universities, agencies, and geography associations to solicit donations (Table 2).

Registration Fee

Our commitment to a no-fee conference produced a significantly higher number of registrations than initially anticipated. In the postconference survey, in answer to "Would you have been able to participate in the conference if a registration fee was required?," one third of respondents answered "No" and another third answered "Maybe." These responses reinforce the value of eliminating or reducing conference fees. However, as we learned, organizers should keep in mind that registration that is "free" to participants is not "free" in terms of conference costs. Each registration incurred a $10 charge on the conference platform, and the significantly larger conference increased logistical costs in terms of event planning and technical support needed. Additionally, we believe that "free" registration led some people to register out of curiosity or with aspirations to participate, but who then did not actually participate in the conference. These unforeseen additional costs, which, in our case absorbed approximately 10 percent of the overall amount spent, prompt important questions to consider when organizing a conference like ours: Are registration fees, even nominal ones, necessary to encourage

Table 1 *Conference cost breakdown*

General expense categories (Total cost = $50,000)	Percentage of budget
Virtual conference technologies: Virtual conference platform and technological assistance and equipment	54%
In-person conference costs: Room and equipment rentals, lodging and food subsidies, student assistants	35%
Keynote panel honorarium	11%

Table 2 *List of funds received as a percentage of conference costs*

List of sponsors	Percentage of conference costs covered by sponsor
U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)	64%
Research and Innovation Office at the University of Colorado Boulder	5%
Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada	8%
Feminist Geography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers	5%
Gender and Feminist Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) with IBG	2%
Geography Department at CU-Boulder	4%
Donations from feminist geography scholars	3%
Jennifer Fluri personal research Funds	9%

participation and offset "wasted" financial cost and volunteer time? Should organizers include a financial buffer into the conference budget to offset costs associated with nonparticipating registrants? Is it preferable to have a nominal fee with provisions for a sliding scale or subsidized vouchers for participants who are unable to afford fees or who cannot get around international barriers to making a digital transaction (e.g., credit card restrictions for certain payments)?

On Translation

Although a no-fee conference for both in-person and online participants was provided successfully, in keeping with our inclusive ethos, initially we aspired to provide live interpretation or synchronous translation during the conference. Unfortunately, this goal was not realized. For live sessions, making captioning and translation available was largely shaped by cost considerations. We used Zoom for live sessions, and streaming captioning—in English only—was available via the specific Zoom site licenses that were purchased. It would have been possible to contract with another service provider for live interpretation and translation during streamed sessions, but the cost would have exceeded $25,000, making this an unaffordable option for our conference. Pheedloop (the conference platform we used) offered translation into twelve languages for static content, such as abstracts, and information provided on the conference platform could be translated by end users. This was included as part of the Web event hosting package. We highlight this here as it is a facet of conference organizing that requires early planning and considerable resources. The provision of live translation would be an important step toward more fully realizing inclusive virtual and hybrid events.

On "Free" Labor Costs

From June 2021 to March 2022, the time commitment for most planning committee members consisted of between ten and twenty hours per month. From April to June 2022, a small subset of planning committee members, mainly those working on building the conference's online platform, working on the conference schedule, and managing communication with keynote speakers, panelists, and attendees, were spending between twenty and fifty hours per week on conference preparation. Because virtual participation was considerably higher than our initial projections, increased time was required for scheduling (we ran up to five concurrent sessions over three days) and conference event platform management. For organizing committees that do not have members who are able and willing to put in this amount of time, particularly in the final stages of planning and conference facilitation, it is important to budget for paid labor. As discussed below, the equipment, technological support, and expertise required for a successful hybrid conference exceeded the experience, knowledge, and volunteer labor capacity of committee members, and we found it necessary to contract an event management company with relevant experience.

Technology, Equipment, and Hybrid Format

With the goal of making the conference as inclusive and accessible as possible, in the early stages of planning, the organizing committee made some key decisions related to format without fully understanding what those decisions required. Although we did, ultimately and successfully, figure out how to realize the envisioned format, doing so entailed significantly more cost, time, expertise, and stress than we had

anticipated. In hindsight, we recommend that determining the technology, equipment, and support needs should be a first step of conference planning. Here, we provide a summary of key format and technology considerations to guide and shape conference event planning.

Hub and Node Model

Hub and node describes a conference that can take place in multiple locations simultaneously. The term can be applied to various conference formats, including virtual only, one hub (in-person venue) and node (virtual), multihub and node, and multilateral hub and node (hub and node across multiple time zones; Fraser et al. 2017). The 2022 Feminist Geography Conference was a multilateral form of hub and node. Several groups in various locations (nodes) explored possibilities for organizing in-person activities that interfaced virtually with the hub, in-person, Colorado sessions (at the University of Colorado, Boulder campus). In the end, two other sites held nodal in-person activities: Kandbari, India, led by Anindita Datta and Anu Sabhlok, and Durham, UK, led by Rachel Colls. We were mindful that at some points during the conference, participants in different locations did not have Internet access for practical (e.g., traveling) or logistical (e.g., being in a remote location) reasons. The hub and node model accommodates these considerations as it allows for localized, in-person participation alongside virtual engagements (Fraser et al. 2017; Parncutt et al. 2021). This model also clearly increases coordination needs and resource costs. Accounting for multiple time zones negatively affected the attendance numbers for some sessions and further complicated the labor required for planning and management of sessions during the live conference. Thus, not every conference participant could reasonably attend sessions outside their own time zone parameters. Finally, each in-person location has its own set of material costs—planning, logistics, and equipment—and multiplies technical support needs for virtual interfacing, as we discuss next (Parncutt et al. 2021).

Conference Platform

For anyone who has attended in-person conferences, the necessary preparations are not difficult to imagine; they include reserving conference space, issuing calls for participation, determining schedules, helping participants secure lodging, and providing refreshments. For virtual and hybrid conferences, a critical piece is determining how participants will interact digitally. There is now a proliferation of virtual conference event platforms, which refers to centrally organized online space where participants can find schedule information; join sessions to watch,

present, and interact; and network with other participants. After exploring several providers, the conference organizing tech committee chose Pheedloop. Pheedloop had a number of integrated platforms that could be set up and used in different ways: a Web site where schedule, speaker, and session information was housed, the conference event platform for running the actual conference, and a mobile phone app providing schedule information and access to sessions. These made for a well-integrated user experience, but each element required distinct attention and maintenance. Once a decision is made on the conference event platform the next important step is to set it up. This is a very time-consuming process. To learn how to do this, the tech committee watched hours of training videos, exchanged messages with support personnel, and attended help webinars. Then, during the conference itself, the event platform requires substantial management. After realizing we did not have the expertise required to run a hybrid conference of our format, size, and length, we hired an event management company, Digital Motion, whose assistance was vital to making our conference a success.

Flipped Format

The organizing committee was eager to facilitate lively, interactive conference sessions and so agreed to offer flipped format sessions during the conference. A *flipped format* means participants record and upload presentations prior to the conference, which allows attendees to view presentations in advance of a live session (see Fraser et al. 2017). During the live session presenters give a summary of their paper, with the remainder of the session devoted to discussion of the presentations. Accommodating flipped format sessions on the conference event platform has advantages but entails significant planning and logistical considerations. Prerecorded presentations meant attendees could easily view and review presentations when there were time zone constraints or schedule conflicts. Also, recorded papers were viewable on the conference platform for six months after the event, extending the opportunity for registrants to view sessions. Although many were enthusiastic about this format, after-conference survey responses indicated mixed results. The flipped format model necessitates time prior to the conference to watch recordings; sometimes, during sessions, presenters gave quite lengthy summaries of presentations; and, for attendees who were unable to watch recordings in advance, it could be difficult to follow the discussion. We believe that to maximize this format's potential requires considerable guidance for all attendees prior to the conference, and, in the end, flipped format might work best for conferences or workshops with smaller numbers of participants.

Equipment and Video Conferencing during the Conference

The equipment and software needs for a virtual conference are intense and largely invisible to conference participants. The same equipment for an all in-person session is needed: a computer, projector, and screen. None of the event platforms we researched came with the necessary video conferencing software and separate Zoom links had to be provided. Each conference session requires a video meeting license. The number of video meeting licenses needed is double the number of concurrent sessions to allow back-to-back sessions to run on schedule. For every session, participants should log in ten to fifteen minutes before the actual start time, and sessions might run over. So, if there are five concurrent sessions, ten Zoom licenses are needed. After realizing the complications involved in piecing together a sufficient number of individual or institutional Zoom accounts, we "rented" Zoom licenses from Digital Motion, our event support company.

Technical Support during the Conference

A hybrid conference also requires substantial staffing and technical support. For every virtual session, at least one support technician is needed to facilitate virtual platform access for participants before a session begins, to connect virtual meetings to the conference event platform, to end sessions, and to be available to address problems during sessions. If a session is hybrid, a person is also needed in the room to help in-person presenters and audience members engage with the virtual platform. Ideally, session chairs should not have to do these tasks so they can focus on facilitating the live session. Our event support company provided this during Colorado business hours. In our experience, it was also necessary to provide online technical support for sessions that took place in time zones outside the conference hub site in the United States. As a result, members of the tech support committee arranged a rota of late night and early morning shifts to provide technical support. This support was complemented by provision of extensive directions and guidance for session chairs regarding how to technically facilitate sessions and manage unexpected technical difficulties.

Online and Hybrid Conference Safety

To provide a safe virtual environment for the attendees and protect sessions from being interrupted, the only way to attend a session virtually was through the conference platform with a prior registration. The conference support company had technicians monitoring sessions who could intervene if Internet security became a concern. Direct Zoom links for particular sessions were shared only with session chairs and participants (for logistics checks prior to the session in the conference platform), with caution not to share or post the link publicly. In addition, an antiharassment statement was shared with all session chairs to read at the beginning of sessions, along with a permission request to record and post the session on the conference platform; if there were objections, the session was not recorded or posted. Session recordings were only available via the conference platform (until the platform contract expired in December 2022). The conference website also included a permission statement that allowed presenters to opt out of inclusion in reports about conference activities and reflected the feminist ethics of care that underpinned the conference as a whole. Finally, the antiharassment statement was noted in the conference welcome speech and included on the Pheedloop virtual conference site.

Advertising, Networking, and Keynote

Because this was an international, hybrid conference, maintaining our social media presence during the event was important to facilitate engagement across time and space. Besides the conference Web site, a Twitter account (@FEMGEOG_) was created nine months before the conference to share updates and announcements. In advance of the conference, we circulated a number of hashtags, initially via the organizing committee, who, in turn, distributed them to their networks and encouraged people to retweet. To reach a wider audience, most announcements were shared through short animations (with verbal and written components) made with Animaker and Canva. These were in English only, so two members of the planning committee translated important announcements into Spanish and German. The amount of time spent curating announcements in various visual forms and moderating the Twitter account varied over time. For instance, making each video animation took at least six hours for an amateur. By the time of the conference, the Twitter account reached more than 1,000 followers and more administrators (at least three) were needed to share the conference's daily schedule and retweet comments.

Like other facets of the conference, the Web site and logo (Figure 1) were developed pro bono by organizing committee members. We kept the conference Web site simple, adding information as it became available, for example about conference themes; travel and booking accommodation; sessions and abstract submission; registration, and schedule. During the conference we posted daily updates and event highlights. Updating the Web site was straightforward, but an issue we had not anticipated in advance was integrating the Web hosting platform (Pheedloop) with the Web site. In hindsight,

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Figure 1 *The Pushing Boundaries conference Web site with logo (designed by Sarah Klosterkamp).*

the Web hosting platform could have doubled as the conference Web page, therefore it is worth giving thought to the timing of decisions related to Web platforms early in the conference planning process.

For those attending the conference, we wanted to provide networking spaces—hybrid and online, as well as in-person—for informal gatherings, to overcome an identified shortcoming of virtual conferences: decreased opportunities for information interactions and building personal and professional connections (Ahn et al. 2021). Our chosen Web hosting platform provided a built-in networking feature that allowed registered participants to text message, live chat, or make video calls, on a one-to-one basis via the platform. Small group virtual networks and meet-ups, for a maximum of five groups, were possible as well. (It is possible with this platform, and presumably others, to allow for larger numbers and networks at additional cost.) We also provided four informal networking sessions across the conference schedule, scheduled to accommodate participants in specific time zones. Networking sessions were given a nominal theme that complemented conference themes (i.e., "feminist ethics of care," "academic activism," and "kitchen table discussion"). The session abstract provided guidance on how sessions could run along with suggestions to initiate conversation and exchange (Figure 2).

We also appointed paid "roving reporters" to attend sessions and events and circulate brief reports and reflections. Two graduate students were recruited for these roles and prior to the conference we determined how to ensure broad session type coverage, report length and style, and where to post and share reports. We discussed at length the issue of consent to share presenters' names, institutional

affiliations, and content from presentations (e.g., visual images). We notified conference participants about the work reporters would be engaged in and, as mentioned earlier, we provided participants an option to decline inclusion in conference reports. The roving reporters' short blog pieces provided valuable insight on conference activities, and they have become part of the event archive. The reporters' activities proved an excellent way to engage graduate students, summarize key conference themes, increase awareness about papers and sessions, and expand possibilities for engagement throughout the conference.

Keynote Speakers and Contracts

In accordance with the conference theme—Pushing Boundaries—the feminist geography keynote planning committee decided to approach the conference keynote session(s) in a somewhat unconventional manner, by organizing a panel of speakers to foster collaborative discussion, and inviting early career scholars from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and research areas to share ideas that challenge accepted norms and orthodoxies in academia. Based on our experiences, we recommend the following for organizing successful keynote speakers, and specifically a speaker panel.

First, although speaker panels offer exciting forums for exchange of ideas, organizing them brings an additional set of considerations beyond those for individual speakers. There should be significant coordination with panelists prior to the conference, agreement regarding topics or prompts for discussion, and specification of the role of a session moderator. Second, when scheduling the panel, it

This is an informal space for (digital) networking, exchanging ideas and meeting with other conference participants. Once the session opens, there is no technical assistance, support or chair. The session theme is intended to help guide conversations with others but, of course, discussions and networking activities are not limited to these themes. Nevertheless, if you like to talk about it, these questions can be used to get things started as you connect with others in the virtual networking space:

1. Introduce yourself to each other. Where is here?
2. What sessions/talks have you visited/watched/joined so far? Where do you want to go next?
3. What if anything, drew you to this informal networking space and this theme? How does you current work/aims/ambitions related to this theme?

Figure 2 *Guidance for virtual networking sessions.*

should be allocated more time than a single keynote speaker, allowing time for each panelist to contextualize their own work, discussion among panelists, and questions from the audience. Third, one or two committee members should be appointed to manage communication exchanges with keynote speakers in consultation with other members. This will facilitate clear and direct communication with speakers, from invitation to conference. For a hybrid conference, event organizers should determine, prior to invitation, if keynote speakers will participate virtually or in-person.

Fourth, we highly recommend employing contracts that clearly delineate mutual expectations between conference organizers and speakers. Although academics might be hesitant to use contracts for fear of curbing freedom of expression or intellectual creativity, contracts help avoid misunderstandings and facilitate achievement of conference and individual goals regarding speaker performance. Expectations of speaker time as part of their participation in the conference should be included in contracts; timekeeping as a feminist practice (Savonick 2017) encourages mindfulness of how we allocate and structure time evenly among tasks, and it avoids rushed decisions. Points to be discussed (and included in contracts) include speaker fee; participation in preconference meetings and provision of any materials preconference; preparation for, length, format, and content of presentations; participation in question-and-answer exchanges; and whether presentations will be recorded.

Organization and Timelines

The organizing committee was composed of roughly twenty-five enthusiastic individuals who were eager, committed, and did a tremendous amount of work to make the event happen. Over the course of the year preparing for the conference, we learned many key lessons to facilitate the organizing process. First, although collective decision-making might be idealized as a feminist practice, there needs to be a clear leadership structure. For a large planning committee, it is important to have numerous subcommittees (i.e., fundraising, budget, technology, session planning, session organizing, communication, and keynote). We suggest that each committee has a chair and vice-chair to build redundancies into the event that someone needs to rotate off a committee. The committee chairs should meet regularly to provide updates on the work of their respective committees to avoid miscommunication. Responsibilities should be clearly assigned to avoid elements "falling through the cracks." From the beginning of the planning process, clearly outline who will be engaged with each stage.

Second, from inception, the organizing committee did and should include representatives from different geographic locations around the world. For our conference, their input was essential for fostering international inclusivity from an organizational standpoint, including providing key details about whether or not different virtual platforms would work in various regions, and ensuring we scheduled sessions to accommodate different time zones. On

the other hand, for a large transnational committee spanning multiple time zones such as ours, it can be a real challenge to meet as a full organizing committee. Although we met regularly with the entire planning committee, in hindsight it would have been more efficient for subcommittees to meet regularly, and then the chairs of each subcommittee meet to track progress and make key decisions. For every meeting, chairs should set specific tasks, and someone should take notes.

Third, clear communication is key. Keep in mind that miscommunication is more likely to happen through asynchronous online platforms (e.g., e-mails), where social cues such as body language and facial expression are absent. Making collective decisions after reading and responding to long threads of e-mails and chains of replies can be time consuming and create possible confusion, as well as marginalize some voices.

Fourth, conference organization requires sustained energy and time, and the organizing committee should plan for distributing members' labor throughout the full arc of preparation. We suggest approaching the organizational labor in phases or tasks, with the earliest stages of conference planning involving assignment of committee members to particular phases, or budgeting for hiring labor for different phases and tasks. In our experience, the primary phases and tasks where labor and time are concentrated are (1) initial planning, including grant and fund solicitation; (2) conference event platform and registration setup; (3) session scheduling and preparation of the conference event platform; and (4) event facilitation.

Because nearly everyone on the organizing committee was new to the process, we adopted a "figure it out as we go" approach. Our process could have been somewhat smoother and significantly less stressful for all if we had had a clearer sense of what to do when. Accordingly, Table 3 provides an ideal timeline of tasks, constructed after our conference, based on our organizing experience.

Final Reflections

Overall, we were thrilled by the experience and outcomes of the hybrid feminist geography conference. The conference met our goals of increasing opportunities for participation and creating spaces for productive and supportive exchange of ideas. The conference had strong graduate student (44 percent) as well as faculty (37 percent) participation. Seventy-one percent of survey respondents indicated that they believed attending the conference would positively affect their academic or career path. The majority of participants would not have been able to attend had the conference been in-person only.

We are convinced that hybrid conferences will continue to play an important role in the academic conference landscape and offer genuine opportunities for increasing access and participation, networking, and exchange of ideas. When selecting this format, organizers should be aware that a hybrid conference is an exceptionally labor-intensive format. Additionally, whereas the costs and equipment needs for in-person conferences are visible to participants, hybrid and virtual conferences have their own set of budgeting, technical, and staffing requirements. Online conference platforms are empty vessels that require considerable labor to set up and manage, and they should be given equal importance as the in-person site arrangements from the beginning of the planning process. Attention should be given to the integration of in-person with virtual platforms. A "flipped format," where participants submit recordings of their presentation before the conference so that the live sessions can focus on open discussion, can be very rewarding but requires careful curating prior to and during the conference to maximize benefits.

Our experience drove home the value of planning ahead, planning early, and strategizing about how to allocate time and labor throughout all stages of preparation. We recommend thinking carefully about organizing committee makeup, structure, and task designation. For speakers receiving honorariums, employ written agreements to ensure shared expectations. For committees without prior conference organizing experience, draw (early and often) on experts, and consider hiring technical support. If possible, obtain funding and establish fee structures for participants in the earliest stages of planning. For all conferences, social media and networking should be a priority, with a dedicated subcommittee and a clear strategy designed early. Think ahead about how best to use different platforms, whether and how to sync or integrate them efficiently, how to best navigate online space when working across multiple time zones, and how to generate a live archive for the event. Assume conference attendees' attention to information sent about the conference will be minimal, so be very clear about alternative format ideas, schedules, and how to use the conference platform. Finally, we believe there were several facets that made this a *feminist* conference, including conference themes to content of presentations; attention to inclusivity, including working across a diverse planning committee; a commitment to removing financial barriers for attendance; and, significantly, the collective efforts and emotions invested in making the conference a successful hybrid endeavor. Our hope, too, as part of a commitment to feminist practice and as a legacy of the conference, is that this frank account will be used as a resource by those organizing future geography

Table 3 *Suggested conference planning chronology*

12–18 Months Before
- Assemble steering committee, subcommittees with chairs and vice-chairs, recruit members
- Select dates and location, reserve physical spaces for conference
- Select theme, work on graphics
- Design budget
- Solicit funds, write grants
- Set up conference Web site (which may differ from conference event platform)
- Conference event platform: Solicit bids
- *(Depending on conference size)* Conference event management company: Solicit bids, select

10–12 Months Before
- Send out "save the dates" to interested groups
- Conference Web site: Add information, manage
- Conference event platform: Sign contract, set up Web site, abstract and session submission
- Solicit funds, prepare grant proposals (submit well ahead of the conference to allow for possible contingency planning)
- Seek and invite plenary speakers, sign speaker contracts
- Seek and hire event management and tech support vendors (if needed)

8–10 Months Before
- Conference Web site: Add info, manage
- Issue calls for participation
- Solicit funds, write grants
- Prepare travel and hotel information for in-person guests

6–8 Months Before
- Conference Web site: Add info, manage
- Solicit funds, write grants
- Budget/payment management
- Finalize conference fees to be charged

4–5 Months Before
- Conference Web site: Add info, manage
- Review budget and solicit additional funds as needed
- Abstract and session proposals due
- Begin to work on selection and scheduling
- Conference event platform: Prepare and open registration (with interface for collecting registration fees)
- Issue proof of participation letters as needed
- In-person: Travel and stay logistics for any speakers
- Budget and payment management

3 Months Before
- Solicit additional funds, if needed
- Complete and publish full yet provisional conference schedule
- Make schedule revisions as needed
- Conference Web site: Add info, manage
- Manage conference registration
- In-person: Travel and stay logistics for any speakers
- In-person: Figure out meals and catering; make restaurant reservations
- Budget and payment management

2 Months Before
- Conference Web site: Add info, manage
- Publish full, final conference schedule
- Conference event platform: Continue to manage conference registration
- Conference event platform: Upload schedule and session information
- Communication: Send out weekly countdown and info e-mails
- Budget and payment management

6 Weeks Before
- Put together "run of show" to coordinate on-site, virtual, and hybrid conference tech and management
- Conference Web site(s): Manage and update
- Conference event platform: Prepare conference app
- *If flipped format:* Prepare and publish instructions for video uploading and posting to conference event platform
- Communication: Send out weekly countdown and info e-mails
- Budget and payment management

4 Weeks Before
- In-person: Prepare on-site materials (name badges, printed schedules, etc.)
- Schedule virtual, hybrid, and on-site tech staffing of conference event platform
- Conference Web site(s): Manage and update
- Conference event platform: Prepare Zoom licenses and links and assign to sessions
- *If flipped format:* Manage video uploading and posting on event platform
- Prepare instructions for conference session chairs
- Communication: Send out weekly countdown and info e-mails
- Budget and payment management

3 Weeks Before
- Send out instructions and Zoom links for conference session chairs
- Make live: Conference event platform and app
- Communication: Send out weekly countdown and info e-mails
- Conference Web site(s): Manage and update
- *If flipped format:* Manage video uploading and posting on event platform
- Budget and payment management

(*Continued*)

Table 3 *(Continued).*

12–18 Months Before

2 Weeks Before
- In-person: Prepare on-site registration and materials; figure out on-site staffing
- Tech training for on-site, virtual, and hybrid use of conference event platform
- Conference Web site(s): Manage and update
- *If flipped format:* Manage video uploading and posting on event platform
- Conference event platform: Prepare networking instructions
- Communication: Send out weekly countdown and info e-mails
- Budget and payment management

1 Week Before
- Prepare daily schedule messages
- Communication: Send out weekly countdown and info e-mails
- Conference Website(s): Manage and update
- Conference event platform: Manage and update
- *If flipped format:* Manage video uploading and posting on event platform
- Conference event platform: Open networking features
- In-person: Prepare materials, staff, facilities
- Budget and payment management

During Conference
- On site: Staffing registration; managing catering and on-site events
- Tech staff facilitation and coordination of in-person, virtual, and hybrid sessions
- Daily schedule messages
- Speaker handling
- Conference event platform: Manage and update
- Networking: Manage or facilitate (via conference event platform, maybe live sessions)
- Budget and payment management

After Conference
- Send postconference surveys and message
- Conference event platform: Run data reports
- Issue proof of participation letters as needed
- Budget and payment management
- Reports to funding and grant agencies
- Uploading recorded sessions to conference event platform (or other repository)

conferences where feminist ethos and praxis are central to planning. ∎

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HANIEH MOLANA is Assistant Professor in Geography at California State University, Sacramento, Sacramento, CA 94819. E-mail: hajimolana@csus.edu. She is a feminist political geographer whose work focuses on gender, temporality, resistance, and social movements within the Middle East region. She is particularly interested in collecting stories of resistance, feminist uprisings, and various forms of state violence in Iran and the broader MENA region.

DEIRDRE CONLON is Associate Professor in Critical Human Geography, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK. E-mail: d.conlon@leeds.ac.uk. Conlon's work examines detention and destitution economies or the marketization, commodification, and continued expansion of carceral and quasi-carceral immigration controls.

JENNIFER L. FLURI is Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography at the University of Colorado-Boulder, Boulder, CO 80302. E-mail: jennifer.fluri@colorado.edu. She is a feminist political geographer whose work focuses on gender, geopolitics, international aid and development, in Afghanistan. Her current project examines the experiences of Afghans evacuated from Afghanistan, women's leadership in the diaspora and under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. In Colorado, she codirects the CU-Boulder Affordable Housing Research Initiative (www.colorado.edu/bahri), a community-based service-research project that provides information for individuals and organizations seeking, living in, or caring about affordable housing.

NANCY HIEMSTRA is Associate Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY 11794. E-mail: nancy.hiemstra@stonybrook.edu. Her recent research examines consequences of U.S. immigration and border enforcement policies both within and outside U.S. borders (2019, 2021, 2023). Her 2019 book sketches the chaotic U.S. detention and deportation system and traces its geopolitical reverberations to Ecuador. With Deirdre Conlon, Hiemstra investigates economies of immigration detention, through a number of journal publications and an edited volume.