

The Perfect Conference

Which leadership events are worth your time?

By Butch Oxendine, editor in chief

Sick of wasting money and time on lame leadership conferences but don't know where to find the best ones? Look no further. Check out *Student Leader's* "Find the Perfect Conference" searchable database of upcoming conferences and conventions at www.studentleader.com. Since our editors attend most of the major events held across the country, *Student Leader* can tell you which ones are the best events. We give you the basics such as times, dates, locations, program themes, and speakers.

You can search by month, location, or scope—or all of the above. If you still can't decide which conference to attend, let *Student Leader* editors recommend one by browsing our top-ranked choices below.

To list your conference in our database, complete the form at www.studentleader.com.

Statewide

■ CHES

WHO: The California State Student Association

WHAT: It's the CSSA's annual statewide convention, a coming together of 250 student leaders from the California state universities.

WHERE: Sacramento, Calif.

WHEN: February • **COST:** \$100-\$150

CONTACT: lkerr@csustudents.org

• www.csustudents.org

• 925 L. St., Suite 320, Sacramento, CA 95814 • 916-441-4514.

Student Leader says: Worthy of your time. Held in the state capital, CHES attracts Associated Students leaders and officers from most CSU schools and branch campuses. CHES features multiple break-out workshops and keynote presentations by fellow students, other experts, and government officials. Includes plenty of networking time, as well as a reception for CSU alums, legislators, and current students. Participants take a day to lobby legislators and assemblymen on education causes during this event. ★★★★★

Regional

■ NW Student Leadership Conference

WHO: Sponsored by the Oregon Student Association, University of Alaska Coalition of Student Leaders, and other groups

WHAT: It's the Northwest's largest gathering of campus leaders from student government, activities groups, and political organizations.

WHERE: Portland, Oregon (Portland State University campus)

WHEN: November • **COST:** \$70-\$75

CONTACT: exec@orstudents.org

• www.orstudents.org/nwslc

• 635 NE Dekum, Portland, OR 97211

• 503-286-0477.

Student Leader says: Worthy of your time.



The best leadership conferences, such as COSGA at Texas A&M University, include "roundtables" so students can share concerns and get solutions.

This is the largest of the regional student leadership conferences. It's all student-volunteer-led and attracts 600 thoughtful and diverse leaders. The event features nearly 100 workshops and keynote addresses by Oregon state officials, with special tracts for students interested in media relations, advanced lobbying, diversity, and reproductive rights, among many other topics. Despite its decidedly liberal slant, this is clearly the best of the regional student leadership conferences. Despite the fact that students not sharing a progressive political perspective may feel inhibited, *Student Leader* strongly recommends this conference. For the money, it's a real steal. ★★★★★

Rankings

Student Leader Editor in Chief Butch Oxendine has participated regularly as a facilitator/workshop presenter at each of these conferences and candidly ranks them as follows:

- ★★★★★—**Excellent.** Well worth your time.
- ★★★★—**Good.** This one's a good investment.
- ★★★—**Average.** You may benefit from this.
- ★★—**Below average.** We think it's overrated.
- ★—**Poor.** Don't bother!

National

■ COSGA

WHO: Conference on Student Government Associations

WHAT: With nearly 600 students attending from 110 schools in 34 states, it's the nation's largest gathering of SG leaders.

WHERE: College Station, Texas (Texas A&M University campus)

WHEN: February • **COST:** \$168-\$212

CONTACT: cosga@stuact.tamu.edu

• cosga.tamu.edu/ • COSGA c/o Texas

A&M University, 127 John J Koldus Building, TAMU 1236, College Station, TX 77843-1236 • 979-845-6416 or 979-845-9394.

Student Leader says: Awesome. COSGA is simply the best national conference for SG leaders in the land. COSGA features four

days of intense programming, which includes speakers, workshops, roundtables, and lectures. The sponsoring committee, a group of 80 Texas A&M students, treats COSGA "delegates" like royalty. This event rivals even the best professional leadership conventions, featuring bright speakers and including a diverse mix of colleges and universities. After the programming is finished, nightlife is a big deal—almost too big. Don't miss it. ★★★★★

■ National Leadership Conference on Student Government

WHO: Center for Leadership

Development at Kansas State University

WHAT: It's an "intimate" conference, featuring a stimulating blend of seminars, workshops, and roundtables, which encourages active participation.

WHERE: St. Louis, Missouri

WHEN: October • **COST:** \$300-\$350

CONTACT: bosco@andy.lan.ksu.edu

• www.dce.ksu.edu

• 2100 Hillview Dr., Manhattan, KS 66502

• 800-432-8222

Student Leader says: This is the best professionally-produced conference for SG leaders in America. Take advantage of the one-on-one consulting offered by workshop facilitators, most of whom have been speaking at this event throughout its 23-year history. Speakers sometimes create workshops on the fly to meet participants' needs based on a roundtable at the beginning of the event. While packed with workshops, speakers, and networking time, the conference sponsor also builds in social time and offers bus service to attractions. It's open to any school but mainly attracts 225 students from smaller universities, private colleges, and community colleges. Don't miss it. ★★★★★

See *Student Leader's* listing of 125 leadership conferences of all types at www.studentleader.com. Look under "Find the Perfect Conference."