

CRIMSA 2019 Emerging Researchers Colloquium

The second CRIMSA/ACTA Emerging Researchers' Colloquium was held on 26 – 27 August 2019 at the Protea Hotel Polokwane Ranch Resort, Farm Hollands Drift, 0700. During the 2018 inaugural colloquium, delegates expressed the need for the colloquium to include topics such as conference preparation, research methods, collaboration in research and writing for an article. It is for this reason that the focus for the 2019 colloquium was '*conference preparation*' and '*research methods and publication*'.

The colloquium was co-facilitated by Editor-in-Chief of *Acta Criminologica* Prof Lillian Artz and CRIMSA Vice-president and Chair of Transformation Dr. Mahlogonolo Thobane. The colloquium was open to 40 emerging researchers who have recently graduated for or are currently pursuing a post-graduate qualification in Criminology or Criminal Justice. Approximately 35 delegates from six universities across the country, namely UNISA, UKZN, UL, UNIVEN, TUT and UP were in attendance. Also represented was the SAPS. Out of the 35 participants, only six attended the 2018 colloquium. As a result, on the first day facilitators dedicated some time to running through some of the topics covered previously (i.e. research methods and publishing of articles) in order to build foundation for the delegates who were not present previously. Additionally, the adaptive teaching approach was employed where content was constantly modified based on the needs of the delegates.

Where conference preparation is concerned delegates were requested (in the acceptance letter) to prepare and bring a brief presentation of no more than 5 slides:

1. Slide 1: The title and a brief summary of the research/publication idea.
2. Slide 2: The objectives of the study/publication (What do you want to achieve?)
3. Slide 3: The audiences you want to capture in your research/publication idea. Who are you targeting and why?
4. Slide 4: What your concerns, challenges or limitations are.
5. Slide 5: Methods, people, systems or processes that you would like to approach to assist you with your concerns, challenges and limitations.

Delegates who prepared their 5 power point slides ahead of the conference were invited to present in front of their peers. A panel discussion format was adopted where each presenter was given 6 minutes to present and the question and answer session was scheduled at the end; after each member of the panel has had a chance to present. Additionally, before the Q&A session each panelist was asked to respond to the following questions, responses are quoted verbatim:

1. How did you experience (the 6 minutes) method?
 - “The method was nerve wrecking but empowering because I was able to manage the time effectively and I only shared the important information.”
 - “The 6-minute presentation method was a new experience for me. However, I learned the skill of summarizing my presentation. The method made my presentation minimal but informative but also straight to the point.”

- “The 6-minute approach was very enlightening and relevant to the current state of affairs within the academic diaspora. It allows a presenter to be concise and cover the necessary content within a reasonable time.”
 - “I think 6 minutes were enough. Nerve-wrecking of course but it’s good practice for time management.”
2. Do you feel you were able to cover key points in 6 minutes?
- “I did what I was able to do in a brief time and I stuck to the main points. It really helped me a lot because I talk a lot and sometimes I end up rushing the presentation due to time.”
 - “Yes. I was able to cover key areas.”
 - “Yes I was able to cover the content within the 6 minutes. It also enabled the presentation not to lose context through over exaggeration of facts.”
 - “Yes It keeps the presentation precise and to the point. There was a framework of what the slides should consist of which I think made sense.”

After the presenters responded to the above questions, the Q&A session was opened up to their peers to provide constructive feedback firstly on the general presentation (i.e. the slides, presentation skill, etc.) and then the content.

A reflection session was scheduled at the end of the two days where each participant was asked to share their experience of the two days. Overall, positive very feedback was provided and the delegates expressed they highly appreciate the initiative.

Additionally, an evaluation form was emailed to the delegates after the colloquium and the following were responses from some of the delegates:

Experience of the 2019 colloquium

- “As a returning delegated I would say that I appreciate the fact that we did not have too much repetition of last year. The information was updated, for me it didn’t feel like a redundant task being there. I feel like I still learnt something new as a returning attendee. Also, the engagement was different obviously because there was different people, there was a new crowd and I appreciated that.”
- “The colloquium was crucial for me as an emerging scholar as it created a platform for self-realisation and enhancement of my presentation skills.”
- “This was my first time attending the colloquium which was really informative. It made me realise that I have potential in academia. The facilitators covered personal and institutional challenges we face as emerging researchers which was one of my favourite discussions. It also created a space to meet new emerging researchers from other institutions which was also a great platform to network.”
- “I had a great experience. This is despite the “minor” disruptions from other delegates. Some things really sank in because I heard them twice.”

Suggestions for future colloquia

- “For future colloquiums I think it would help to round robin prior to the colloquium to hear what topics people want to be covered.”
- “As much as we are there to learn and empower each other we also need to learn to be professional during interaction with each other and during presentations. A request was sent to candidates to prepare presentations and to confirm if they are still presenting, so if people attend the colloquium but didn’t confirm their intentions to present they should not be allowed to present. The programme is compiled to manage time effectively.”
- “Regarding future colloquiums, the criteria should be broadened to include scholars who are in the actual work place like prosecutors, investigators, lecturers and criminology specialists.”
- “In future the setup for the first colloquium should be followed. It fostered a more engaging and interactive environment for delegates. Also, the number of delegates ought to be reduced as to foster a more learning environment as it was in the first colloquium. Lastly, instead of having just one colloquium, perhaps two can be organised where the second one is dedicated to writing articles. Much like a writing retreat but more interactive. Delegates come with their papers (not concepts, full papers) that are meant to be tweaked and made better before submitting.”
- “The colloquium was good, but I will suggest that we include a writing retreat of some kind where an article in progress will be considered and reviewed with necessary guidelines.”
- “As it was my first time in attendance, everything went well. Continue with the great work.”