

August 15, 2017

TO: William Bridel, NASSS Conference Committee

FROM: Bob Case, 2019 NASSS Conference Locator

RE: 2019 NASSS Conference Site Recommendations Summary Report

I had the opportunity to visit four different hotels in three cities. William Bridel visited the Marriott hotel in Ottawa during a recent business trip there. The hotel in Ottawa had submitted a bid for the 2019 NASSS Conference. Herschel from Helms Brisco provided a great deal of information and data from a number of cities in the U.S. and Canada who bid on the 2019 NASSS Conference for the Northeast U.S. and Canada. The cities included New York, Boston, Toronto, Providence, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Washington, D.C. suburbs, Norfolk, VA, Baltimore, Virginia Beach, VA, Ottawa, and Montreal.

After looking at all the data from Herschel and reviewing the site visit evaluations, I have developed a summary list and report for the Committee's consideration. My report will be in general terms and bullet format. It will not negatively compare one hotel or city against another. Some cities were immediately eliminated because they did not meet the NASSS RFP requirements. For example, some cities proposed hotel room rates of over \$250 and this is way more than the NASSS membership is willing to pay. Other hotels may have proposed very high food and beverage minimums or they may have required a high number of hotel rooms to be occupied for the conference in order to receive free use of breakout rooms during the conference. Some hotels had high charges for breakout rooms. Other hotels were in isolated areas without an opportunity for NASSS attendees to sightsee or visit restaurants, bars, and shops in the area. Some hotel could were not available during the NASSS Conference dates.

The four cities that were visited included Baltimore, Norfolk, VA, Ottawa, and Virginia Beach, VA. I am proposing that Virginia Beach, VA be selected as the #1 choice and be used as a wild card for NASSS 2019. The reason for this is that NASSS will be located in Windsor, Ontario in 2017 and Vancouver in 2018. If a Canadian city is selected for 2019, then this would be three years in a row. Using Virginia Beach as a wild card in 2019 makes sense for the NASSS conference. Either Ottawa or Montreal could be selected during the next northeast rotation and continue from that point on.

In the past, Virginia Beach has hosted two sport related conferences and each conference received excellent reviews from the conference attendees. The hotel selected in Virginia Beach is the Hilton which is a 4-star hotel that meets all of the RFP requirements presented by NASSS. It is on the beach and oceanfront in Virginia Beach next to many restaurants and bars. A variety of sightseeing, recreation, and dining opportunities are available to NASSS attendees.

The rankings that follow include my top choice followed by my second choice, etc.

**#1 Choice = Virginia Beach Hilton (Bob Case was able to visit this hotel).**

- a. Hilton is offering free breakout room usage upon meeting a \$25,000 F&B minimum. This does meet the NASSS RFP requirements.
- b. Hilton has the facilities to accommodate the 2019 NASSS Conference and they are excellent.
- c. Hilton has 8 breakout rooms on the same floor for the conference. Three of the breakout rooms are very large and they can hold over 100 attendees per session. The other breakout rooms are more than adequate for the needs of NASSS. A 9<sup>th</sup> smaller room is also available.
- d. NASSS would be the only conference taking place during the designated time frame which is the first choice of dates for the NASSS Conference (week of Nov. 4-Nov. 10, 2019).
- e. Hallway in front of breakout rooms has adequate space for attendees to gather and talk with friends.
- f. The hotel ballroom has excellent space to meet the reception and meal needs of NASSS.
- g. Registration tables and vendor tables can be placed in a large hallway near the breakout rooms to generate high traffic flow for the vendors.
- h. Coffee breaks can be held in the large hallway outside the breakout rooms.
- i. Hilton has a board room that is available for executive board meetings on the same floor as the breakout rooms.
- j. Registration desk is adequately staffed for check in and check out.
- k. Hilton is located on the beach and oceanfront of the Atlantic Ocean with a boardwalk that runs for over 2.5 miles. NASSS attendees can walk, job, or bike on the boardwalk.
- l. Modern and newer hotel that is 13 years old.
- m. Hilton has enough hotel rooms to accommodate all NASSS conference guests as per the RFP.
- n. Room rates are \$159 ocean view and \$139 city view.
- o. Free wifi for hotel guests.
- p. \$8 per day parking for hotel guests with parking garage connected to hotel via walkway. Valet parking is available.
- q. International airport that can provide flights by major airlines is 20 minutes from hotel (18 miles).

- r. Uber ride from airport to hotel is approximately \$25 one way. Airport shuttle is also available.
- s. Several restaurants, shops, and bars are within a few hundred yards from the hotel. For example, Irish Pub, Chop House, micro brewery, Buffalo Wild Wings café, seafood buffet restaurants, pizza restaurants, and nightclubs are within walking distance to the hotel.
- t. Vans are available to shuttle NASSS guests to several other oceanfront restaurants and bars that are on Atlantic Avenue where the hotel is located and within half a mile distance.
- u. Sightseeing includes whale watch boat rides, marine science museum, Pirate ship rides, putt putt golf, indoor skydiving, etc. All these are available at the oceanfront not far from the hotel.
- v. Interstates I-64, I-95, and I-264 lead into and out of the Hampton Roads area from all directions.
- w. Hilton has an indoor fitness room and indoor pool.
- x. NASSS attendees can take walks or jog on the boardwalk in front of the hotel that runs parallel to the beach for miles.
- y. Hilton willing to utilize the exclusive rooftop sky bar on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor for the NASSS opening reception.
- z. Hilton is willing to offer some hotel rooms at lower rates for graduate students.

**Summary:** The Virginia Beach Hilton was visited by Bob Case and it appears to be the best overall choice for the NASSS membership for the 2019 conference. When you compare price, location, and facilities, the Virginia Beach Hilton comes out on top. Although the location is on the border of the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions, it is more in the north than the true south. It is very similar to the location of New Orleans being in the Southwest. Both Virginia Beach and New Orleans are on the borders of their respective northeast and southwest borders. This hotel is a newer and modern hotel with excellent views of the ocean since it is on the beach. Plenty of activities are available for attendees to do in their free time. Several restaurants and bars are near the hotel. The conference facilities are excellent with plenty of room on one floor.

**#2 Choice = Ottawa Marriott (William Bridel was able to visit this hotel)**

- a. The Ottawa Marriott is available during the first choice of dates, Nov. 4-Nov. 10
- b. Room rates are \$168 USD
- c. Ottawa has an international airport with major carriers.
- d. Breakout rooms are adequate in size except that they are available on two floors.
- e. Area surrounding the hotel has restaurants and bars within walking distance.
- f. Food and beverage minimum is \$20,000 USD.
- g. Free wifi in guestrooms.

- e. Parking for guests is approx.. \$18 per day with valet parking available.
- f. The Ottawa Marriott Hotel does meet the space requirements in the NASSS RFP.

**Summary:** This hotel was visited by William Bridel this summer. It is a very nice hotel that is walking distance to other restaurants and bars. The space and meeting room requirements do meet the NASSS RFP requirements. Breakout rooms are on two floors.

**#3 Choice = Norfolk Sheraton (Bob Case was able to visit this hotel).**

- a. First choice of dates on Nov. 4 were available but are gone now. The week before and after Nov. 4 are still available.
- b. F&B minimum is \$28,000 for free breakout rooms. If not met, \$2,800 per day rental.
- c. Room rates are \$145 but willing to go lower since first preference dates have been booked.
- b. Sheraton has undergone a complete renovation.
- c. The front lobby area is excellent.
- d. Room rates are
- e. Breakout rooms are free with
- f. Very nice restaurant and bar with harbor views.
- g. New \$30 million entertainment complex (Waterside District) has opened next door with several upscale restaurants and bars.
- h. A new “Grain” nightclub is located in the new Hilton within 300 yards from Sheraton.
- i. Sightseeing includes the Yankee Rover tall ship cruises in front of the hotel, Spirit of Norfolk in front of hotel, Nauticus Maritime Museum and Battleship Wisconsin within 500 yards of hotel, General MacArthur Museum and Burial site with half mile from hotel.
- j. Modern MacArthur Mall is walking distance from Sheraton.
- j. Granby Street restaurant and bar district near hotel.
- j. Breakout rooms are all on one floor and they are separate rooms and not divided rooms from one large banquet room. This will help with the acoustics.
- j. Fitness center available.
- j. \$8 per night self parking. Valet parking is available.
- k. \$25 from airport to hotel. It is a 20 minute ride. .
- l. Hotel vans available to transport guests to local restaurants and shopping.
- m. Free wifi in guest rooms.
- n. Breakout room and vendor display area is very wide with plenty of space. Again, it is all on one floor. Coffee breaks could be held in this area as well.

**Summary:** This is a very nice renovated hotel in downtown Norfolk next to a new multi-million entertainment complex on the Norfolk inner harbor that is beautiful. Plenty of things to do and see. Room rates and f&b minimum are competitive. Unfortunately, the first choice of dates have been booked with the week before and after still available.

#### **#4 Choice = Montreal Hotel Bonaventure**

- a. Near Old Montreal
- b. Modern looking hotel.
- c. \$58,000 USD f&b minimum. A sliding scale for breakout room charges is also in effect.  
A lower f&b rate is needed and elimination of sliding scale. Can't guarantee room and other charges will stay the same. This would need to be negotiated.
- d. Adequate meeting space. Reception area is a little small.
- e. Adequate number of breakout rooms.
- f. Other restaurants and bars appear to be within walking distance from the hotel.
- g. Parking rates are approx.. \$20 USD self parking with valet available.
- h. Airport approx.. 20 minute ride and \$20-\$25 USD fee one way.
- i. First choice of dates are still available.

**Summary:** This hotel was not visited but it appears to be a very nice hotel. The red flag would be the high f&b minimums and a sliding scale for room usage. These would need to be negotiated way down. This hotel is the 4<sup>th</sup> choice.

Please see attachments for each city from Herschel (Helms Briscoe Company).

Thank you,

Bob Case