SESSION 1: Welcome & Overview

Duration: 15 minutes

Facilitator: Section Chief

Learning Outcomes:

Understand the reasoning behind the ACT Conference.
Understand how ACT is going to function, and how it is going to help each lodge and the greater organization.
Review the process of goal setting and accountability partners.

Supplies: None

I. Welcome

Welcome delegates to the Section XX-XX ACT Conference. Thank you for your attendance and commitment to your lodges and the OA. We are excited to welcome you for a day of training, networking, and fellowship. We gather here today at a critical time for the Order of the Arrow. Our role as a section is first and foremost to ensure lodges have the tools, talent, and template to be successful. This event has been developed in an effort to give you the resources and the curriculum necessary to help your lodge Adapt, Collaborate, and ultimately Thrive (ACT).

a. Obligation

[Recite the OA Obligation.]

II. ACT Overview

a. What is a Section ACT Conference?

This is an exciting time for the Boy Scouts of America generally, and the Order of the Arrow specifically. Over the past several years, we have taken steps which now allow us to welcome more members than ever before (women, LGBTQ Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts) who can now be fully part of our program. As our membership criteria have expanded, our commitment to recognizing those Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their everyday lives and our high standards for what it means to wear this sash have remained unchanged.
As we continue to welcome more people into our organization, we must find ways to grow and adapt to meet the needs of the youth who we exist to serve. The OA exists today because those who came before us committed themselves to growing our organization. This conference is our chance to do so for the generations of Arrowmen to come.

We know every lodge is different, with its own strengths and opportunities. We also know the best organizations continue to regularly examine their own processes and practices to ensure they are doing what is necessary to Thrive. Our goal is to help you create the systems necessary for your lodges to build on their strengths, learn from our peers, and create an organization which will exist long after we are no longer youth members.

**b. ACT Takeaways**

During this conference, we will examine our current practices to document where we excel, and where we can grow. You will meet your peers from other lodges and hear about what they are doing. We encourage you to learn from one another, as they face many of the same problems that your lodge may be facing. Finally, you will create a customized action plan for your lodge. The goals in this plan will be shared with section, regional, and national leadership who will partner with you to turn these ideas into reality.

**III. Staff Introduction**

So, who are the people who are going to help us develop these goals for our conference this weekend? I’m going to invite each of our staff members to come forward and introduce themselves.

[Each staff member should walk to the front of the room and introduce themselves, including any current and previous positions within the OA. The staff must establish their gravitas and credentials with respect to high-functioning OA and Scouting teams.]

**IV. How To Make The Most Of the Weekend**

What do people say about Las Vegas? What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. Well, this conference is not Las Vegas. If ‘what happens here stays here,’ then this whole event will be a waste. We cannot call this conference a success if we only do a good job training or have great food. We can only call this conference a success if you can learn new skills, and implement an actionable plan to help your lodge Thrive today and for years into the future. So, here are some tips to help you make the most of your ACT Conference.
a. Remember What You Learn
With a day full of speakers and sessions, there’s a lot to take in — and you’re probably not going to remember all of it when you get home. So, collect your notes and information in a way that makes it easy to access when you return to your home. Regardless of your note-taking format of choice (pen and paper, laptop, tablet, smartphone), we will invite you to write down three key takeaways at the end of each session. This will help jog your memory and give you specific to-dos when you get back to your lodge.

b. Connect With the Staff and Your Fellow Delegates
Your best resources this weekend are the staff and other delegates at this conference. So, don’t be afraid to ask questions or approach someone after a session to say hello, start a conversation, and exchange contact information if you want to follow-up. We don’t have to limit our networking to only this conference.

c. Limit Phone Use
You may be thinking: “But—I have so many emails waiting!” But here’s the thing: You’re at this conference to have in-person interaction, and you don’t want your electronic devices to be a barrier to making those connections. So, while you don’t have to disconnect completely, put the phone away when you’re waiting for a session to begin or while we are taking a break; and give yourself a chance to strike up conversations with the other delegates around you. These are the people who are your best resources!

d. Follow-Up
At the conference, try to meet people who have the same positions as you in other lodges. When you return home, it’s time to continue the conversation. Within a week of returning from the event, send a personal follow-up to everyone you meet to let that person know you enjoyed meeting. Additionally, set up a phone call or face-to-face meeting (adhering to YPT standards) with anyone you specifically want to build a relationship with or discuss follow-up questions.

e. Pay It Forward
You gained a lot of new information, inspiration, and contacts at the conference; and one of the best things you can do with those resources is to share them with your fellow Arrowmen who are not here this weekend. At your next LEC meeting, report to your lodge what you’ve learned and the goals you have set. You will spread your new skills and knowledge—and hopefully your Brothers will reciprocate the next time they go to a great training event.
V. Goal Setting & Accountability Partners
Prior to this weekend, each lodge chief spoke with someone from the Section ACT Conference staff to discuss the individual goals of each lodge, especially with respect to their election, induction, and activation rates. During this ACT Conference, it is our responsibility to work with each of you to identify the specific steps every lodge will take over the course of the upcoming year to achieve these goals. This is not the start of a basic transactional relationship between the lodge and section; this is one of many collaborations where the section and lodge will be partnering together to build a thriving Order. After this conference, every lodge will have many follow-up conversations with section staff to ensure every Arrowmen has the necessary tools to get the job done!

VI. Conclusion
We are here in the service of our delegates. If you have a question, ask. If you don’t fully grasp a point, let us know. If you want to discuss something more, that’s why we’re here! So, that’s the end of the introduction…now let’s get started!