# So You Wanna Make A Poster?

If you do research, chances are there might be a poster session that will give you the opportunity to show your work. This is where that work and your creative abilities come together to shine! Hopefully, with the help of this mini "tutorial", you'll be able to work through the kinks and have everything you need to hit the ground running.

The first thing you'll want to do is download a poster template. You can follow this link and this link to find some UConn templates or, if none of them suit your fancy, you can simply Google "[insert size constraints here] poster template" and find multiple links with free templates for you to use. Note that you'll want to use whichever software you're most comfortable with since things will get very nit-picky near the end and you'll want to avoid as much headache as possible.

Now that we've got our template, let's break it down. Regardless of which poster template you're using, you may want to go ahead and download the "Navy New Template" just to read the tips they put in the text boxes. If you're struggling for inspiration, you can look up sample research posters that have already been done or head to MSB and look at posters other students have already made. This way, you can get a better idea of what sort of information you'll want to include.

Each poster should provide context for your research, the data and results, a summary of these results, and an acknowledgements or references section citing the sources you've used. So long as you include that, you can call the headers whatever you like. For instance, you could include an abstract rather than an introduction. Or, write up an abstract and then include an "Introduction & Background" section to provide more context to your research. As for the headers that provide the bulk of your information, you'll really want to tailor each one to your specific research. Here's my poster as an example:
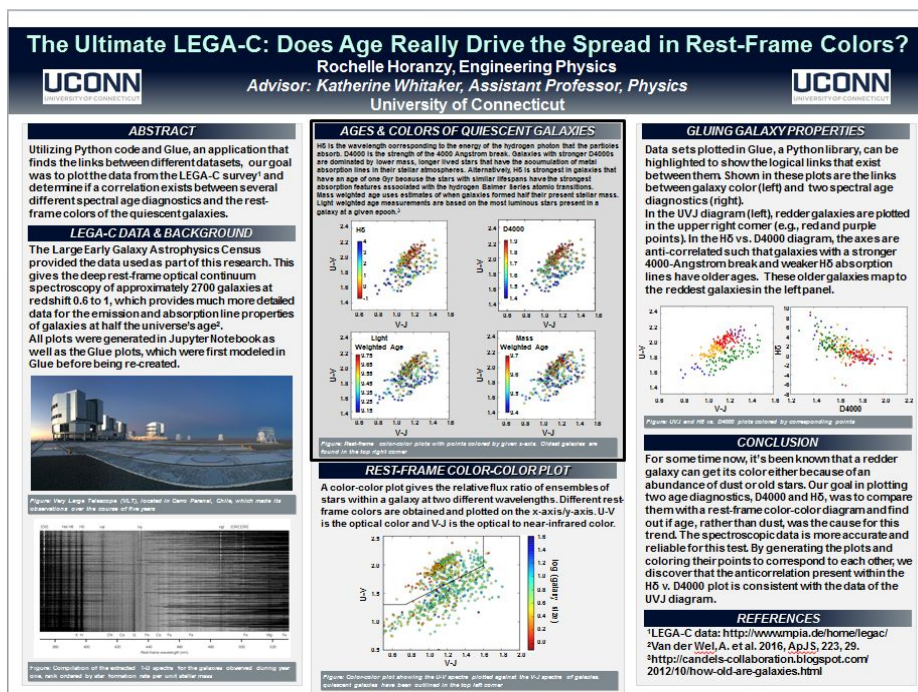
As you can see, there's no "Methods" or "Results" section. Instead, you'll find each section header is based off the main figure presented there. If you look up "Physics Research Poster", you'll find many other posters that include headers based on the work presented within the section.

Finally, chances are you have some lovely figures already made up that you'll want to put in your poster. While these may look nice in Python, they don't look so nice in a poster. Let's look at an example figure:
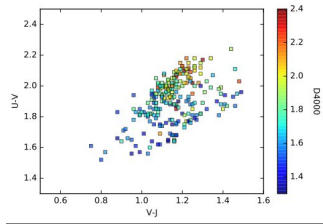

Now, there's nothing inherently wrong with this figure. But, hopefully you can tell just by looking at it that it's pretty darn hard to read what the text is and, by extension, what the figure is even trying to tell you. In order to make figures "poster ready", you can play around with them in Keynote if you have an Apple product or use Powerpoint, just like I am, to make them look the way you want them to. Make sure, if you're using Powerpoint, to group the boxes and images together so the image can be dragged and dropped as needed. This can be done by pressing ctrl and clicking on the images you wish to group, then going to the **Picture Tools -> Format** header and selecting the **Group** option in the **Arrange** tab.

You can start by cropping everything out except the center figure. Then, you can move the colorbar inside the plot and add the colorbar label above the bar instead of to the side. This will make your new figure look like this:
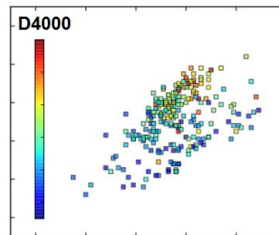
A good thing to note is that you'll want to use a font like Arial, which is easy to read from a distance. The last thing we'll want to do is replace the old axis ticks and labels so that they're bolder and bigger. You should have a final product that looks something like this:
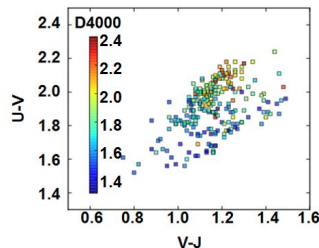
These are just a few things you can do to improve your poster, but the rest is up to you! Good luck!