How to Turn a Paper or Addendum into a Poster

Why create a poster?
You may have been invited to do a poster presentation based on your paper or addendum for a conference such as Intersections or an on campus event such as Academic Excellence days. Poster sessions are a popular component of conferences during which conference goers can view the works of researchers and discuss their methods and results one-on-one. Poster sessions are most popular with the sciences, but may be found in all disciplines.

What is a poster presentation?
A poster presentation is given in an academic setting, which can include a classroom or a conference. A poster presentation allows you to present the methods, results and conclusions of your research in a compact, visual way that allows viewers to quickly understand your work. The idea is to give you an opportunity to share your research with others and engage in professional discussions.

1. Your poster will contain at least three sections, an introduction, a results section and a conclusion. Additionally, you may need to include a section for citations or acknowledgements.
2. You cannot fit all your research onto the poster. Therefore, the introduction should briefly explain the point of your research project. If your project is a research-based it will also need a brief section for materials and methods, laying out what was used and how your research was conducted. The most important part of your paper is your proofs or results and will have a corresponding section on the poster. This should be the largest part of the poster and will contain any graphs or charts with relevant data. The conclusion should contain a well thought-out description of the “so-what” of your results. What do your results show? What does it mean? Why does it matter? Citations and/or acknowledgements can be put in a brief section after the conclusion if you have any.
3. Next, decide the format, color scheme and fonts. This is an important step in the process because the decisions you make will help draw attention towards your poster. If you have a friend who is a Graphic communications major, consulting her is a good idea at this step. He can give you helpful tips to making your poster aesthetically savvy. You should also decide on a title and placement/sizing for that title.
4. Since you have already decided your layout the next step is to type and resize/edit the text font to fit the area of the poster where it will inhabit. There are several free online resources for doing this. If you are familiar with graphic design, you should be able to do this with InDesign or Adobe Illustrator. Make sure that you clearly label each section so the viewers know what they are reading.
5. Now that you have your poster assembled, like a paper, you should have it peer edited. Ask some friends, coworkers and/or teachers to look at it and give you feedback, it helps if the individual has experience with posters or conferences. Members of the Honors faculty are another good resource and are always willing to help. They can be found in the Honors offices in the Smith Honors hall. Having a friend with graphic design experience is also good at this point in the process because she or he can give you good and honest feedback as to what needs to be fixed.
Helpful Tips:

- All in all, the text of your poster should be about 800 words long.
- Do not forget to include your name, the university, the Honors Program name, and the name of the professor you worked with.
- Avoid creating “walls of text”. These can intimidate readers and make them lose interest in your poster. Individual sections should be between 200-400 words.
- Avoid using obnoxious color schemes or layouts. You want your poster to look professional, as it will be displayed to a professional audience. Use a common font (Times New Roman, Cambria or Arial are preferable) and make sure any images/clip art is relevant. Avoid glitter.
- The Honors Program has a lot of posters from previous students. Feel free to come in to the Honors office and look at how previous Honors students have created posters.

Helpful Links

- General information on creating posters and formatting examples: http://colinpurrington.com/tips/academic/posterdesign
- More Helpful information in power point style: http://www.ga.lsu.edu/Effective%20Poster%20Design%20for%20Academic%20Conferences.pdf