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Information & Guidelines for Session Chairs

The major tasks associated with being a session chair are:

- Finding the best presentations and speakers for the session subject
- Coordinating with the Conference Chair and other session Chairs to ensure the best fit all of presentations into the overall conference and other logistical issues
- Identifying alternate presentations/speakers in case of cancellations
- Registering for the conference during the appropriate registration time window
- Ensuring that all presenters are registered for the conference during the appropriate registration time window
- Obtaining abstracts and other material from presenters in time to meet publication deadlines
- Obtaining and reviewing draft final presentations to ensure quality of content and presentation and communicating results to presenters
- Attending on-site orientations and orienting presenters in you session
- Opening and closing the sessions on time, including introduction of speakers and making any pre- or post- session announcements

1. Preparation

Preparation begins when you are notified that you have been named as a session chair, or approximately 1 year before the conference. The Conference Coordinator and Conference Chair will identify a timeline to be followed.

Proper selection of presentations involves soliciting and obtaining more potential papers than the minimum needed for a given session, then selecting the best in terms of timeliness and topical interest along with the anticipated quality of the presentation by the speaker. Do not settle for the first 4 or 5 potential presentation. Solicit up to twice the minimum number and review all abstracts before making any selection.

A Call for Papers will be made several months before the conference, but most Chairs will have a good idea before this as to who and what may be used.

Remind presenters that Presentations should be technical and informative. Commercialism in presentations is strongly discouraged. Please be sure speakers in your session understand this. Presenters should avoid commercialism such as vendor sales pitches. Those types of presentations are simply not appropriate for this conference and they will hear about it in the post-conference survey. Normally, a good job in selecting presentations for the conference should alleviate the problem; however, if you have a presenter in your session that looks as though he or she might need this reminder, do it. If you have any problem with a presenter, please see the Conference Chair or Co-Chair. Historically, the name of the organization in the abstract does not appear more than once.

Details on Audio/Visual Preparation

- PowerPoint on a PC with LCD projector will be available. An overhead projector will be available upon advance request only. If speakers have other needs, let the Conference Chair know 30 days before the conference start date. Last-minute arrangements cannot be guaranteed. We will also have at least one laptop computer dedicated to the conference. The Conference Coordinator or the Conference Chair will be responsible for securing the projector and laptop after each session and ensuring that they are in the conference room well before the start of each session.

- PowerPoint for Windows (Version 2007) is the software we expect most people will use. If someone needs another type of software, please let us know 30 days before the conference start date. Any requests for other A/V support after this cannot be guaranteed.

- Please let the Conference Chair know at least 30 days in advance of the conference if any of the presentations in your session will require Internet access or include embedded video. We will attempt to accommodate such needs, but can only do so if we know about them in advance.

- Have your presenters save their power points as a ".pps" (power point show). This allows the file to begin automatically without having to open power point each time.

2. Logistics

At least one day before the session

- Review the conference Final Program for the exact location, day and time of your session.

- Locate all papers in your session in the conference abstract book/proceedings, and note the page numbers. Please note that there may be a few papers out of sequence in the proceedings compared to the actual presentations.

- Presenters and session chairs will sign in when registering. You can check this list at the registration desk to determine if your presenters have arrived.

- Check that all audiovisual equipment needed is available in the room and that it is properly positioned and tested. Be prepared to help presenters if any problems arise during the sessions.

- Meet with a member of the AV team during a break before your session to review your duties with respect to operation of the AV equipment. Get familiar with various light switches and projector switches before you start the session so that you won't waste time during the session if they need adjusted. The Conference Director, Conference Chair, and Co-Chair will help with lighting.

On the day of the Session

- All PowerPoint presentations should be saved to the conference computer during breakfast on the day you will speak (or before). You are responsible for making sure that all PowerPoint presentations in your session are loaded onto the conference computer. You should make sure that each presenter provides you with a memory stick (or CD) with his or her presentation so that you can load all of the presentations on the laptop before the start of the session. You might consider gathering the presentations the night before a morning session or during the day before an evening session so that you aren't running around trying to find speakers as the session is supposed to start. We do not want people to be loading their presentations during the session when they are supposed to be presenting.

- Once all of your papers are loaded onto the laptop, you can link the presentations together using the Conference Session Template provided by the Conference Chair. This template is designed to have a seamless transition between speakers. The Conference Session's Template will remind the audience to turn off cell phones or any devices disrupting the session's speakers. Moreover, it will contain the session topic, title, and the presenting author's names. At the end of each session, a slide containing information (e.g., lunch/diner locations, VB/golf, breakout sessions, poster session) will be displayed. The Conference Coordinator and the Resort A/V personnel will assist with this.

- If you want to load all the presentations for your session on your own computer beforehand and bring that PC to use in the session, you may. Just be sure that you are loaded and connected to the projector on time and make sure the Conference Session's Template links are functional before the start of your session. You should also meet with the AV technician at a break in advance of your session to understand cabling connections and verify equipment compatibility and function.

- You need to discourage presenters from trying to use their own computers; disconnecting one PC and changing to another during the session is distracting, can take a lot of time, and does not always work well. If you think that this will be an issue, let the Conference Chair know. We can get a VGA connector for multiple PCs if we need it. Even with that, we need to make sure all PCs are connected and ready to go before the session start time.

- Make sure that the speaker uses the microphone so that everyone can hear them. There will probably be a podium microphone, but it is preferred that the speakers use the earset microphone. Notify HMS in advance if other arrangements are needed. In our experience, speakers too often have trouble speaking into a stationary microphone. There will be a second earset microphone that the Session Chair can use for introductions and to recognize participants for questions and comments and to be used to for the next speaker so time is not wasted switching out the mic. The Conference Chair or Co-Chair can help with changing the earset mics.

2. Session Management

At the Session

- Note that in 2015 each session will start with a 5-minute safety short. As session chair, you will be introducing the safety short (~30-45 sec).

- **Please start and end your session on time.** It will help if you prepare a presentation-by-presentation timetable of your session as a guide to staying on time. Include the amount of time for your opening remarks, introductions, presentations, and discussion time. Please check with your presenters and know which author will make the presentation.

- **The Conference Chair or Co-Chair will make special announcements**, if needed, and briefly introduce you at the start of the session. Sunday night's conference opening will take ~10 min.

- **Introduce your session.** There is about 5 minutes built into the schedule for your introductions and for you to engage the audience with something to get your session started. You might consider describing the theme of your session, how it is responsive to the suggestions from last year's conference and/or a personal story you think might be of interest (e.g., a difficult trip to the conference location, a hard night socializing with the Canadians, pictures of your latest diving trip or golf exploits). We would like for you to take about 5 minutes to make sure the participants get to know who you are and a little about the session background. Inform the audience of the relevant page numbers in the program booklet.

- **Briefly introduce each speaker in 2 or 3 sentences**. Obtain information about the authors' education, affiliation, brief work history, important achievements and special awards, etc. for their proper introduction at the session. Only the information about the presenter is important for a multi-authored paper. Reading the title and authors names first at the session acknowledges the other authors. As you know, the structure of this conference is traditionally informal with one goal being that participants get to know each other on a personal level. Long detailed CVs do not fit with this format; we expect that presenters are experts in their fields or they would not be presenting. We recommend that introductions be minimal as far as technical background. You might identify the organization for which the presenter works and the relevant background that applies to the topic (e.g., conducts or contracts field test studies of ___ or conducts laboratory analyses for ____). You may consider learning something about each speaker and use that in the introduction (e.g., coaching kids' soccer, favorite travel destinations, playing videogames, parasailing, scuba diving, golf, etc.).

- **Presentations should start and end on time**. Remind the speakers when their time is going to be finished with warnings at 2 minutes and 1 minute. Morning presentations are ~40 minutes each; allow 15 minutes for questions in the Morning presentations. Evening presentations are ~30 minutes each. Allow ~10 minutes for questions/discussion within this time allotment (use your discretion to fit the session needs). The goal is for each speaker to use about two-thirds of that time to present the technical information, offer some conclusions, and pose some issues to be resolved, as appropriate. If you are chairing a Flash Session, be sure to specify the time and format of the session.

- One of your tasks is to remind presenters (ahead of time) to focus on technical information, case study results, procedural and test/lab coordination issues, and technology advancements and minimize the minutia of the data collection (e.g., summary charts and graphs are OK, data dumps and chromatograms are not).

- Panel and Poster sessions have time allotments managed by the Session Chair within the allotted Session schedule. If the first part of the session runs over, we can make up a little bit of time by cutting into the coffee breaks (except for Tuesday and Wednesday when breaks are planned for poster presentations). But try to avoid this since people tend to really appreciate the breaks!

- **Manage questions and discussions** following presentations to facilitate discussion and to maintain decorum and schedule. Recognize those who have questions or comments, minimize interruptions, and help the presenter understand the question or issue, as necessary. We suggest you have one question yourself for each presentation to get questions and discussion rolling. Question and discussion should be reserved for audience participation questions on technology and procedures, alternative conclusions, and suggestions for further research, remain somewhat flexible. Your job is to ensure that no one participant dominates the post-presentation discussion. Our concern should be to avoid letting one participant get on a soapbox, get the presenter involved in a lot of minutia, or otherwise prevent others from engaging. You must pay attention; some prolonged discussions are constructive, others are unproductive or simply grandstanding. We strongly suggest that you mark the start and end times for each of your speakers on your agenda and stick to those times. If the discussion on any one paper continues longer than anticipated, interrupt and terminate the discussion, encouraging continuation during the coffee break, meals, and other times during the day. The Conference Chair and Co-Chair can help enforce this if there are any problems.

- There will be a microphone in the center aisle for questions. Please, encourage participants to get up and use the microphone and give preference to those who do. If someone asks a question or makes a comment to the presenter without using the mic, you or the presenter must repeat the question or comment to the entire room. Sidebar discussions are disruptive and shortchange all conference participants.

- At the beginning of a coffee break, state the exact time everyone is expected back in the conference room. In 2013, Laura's style was effective (e.g., 10:27 AM)

- At the end of the session, thank the speakers and participants, note the topic and time of the next session, and allow time for the Conference Chair, Co-Chair, and Conference Director to make any announcements.

3. <u>Poster Session Management</u>

- All posters must be up before 5:00 pm on the day before the allocated day. Posters must be taken down by 11:30 pm on the day before the next poster session, if applicable. This is a great format for facilitating more informal and probing discussions of timely, late-breaking and/or work in progress presentations. Please show your appreciation to the poster session presenters by encouraging others to attend and by stopping by during their presentations and asking a few questions. You can do this by reviewing the abstracts in advance of your session, noting the ones the relevant to the material in your session, and calling attention to them during your opening remarks.

- Coffee breaks are 30 minutes for morning sessions and 20 minutes for evening sessions. Coffee breaks on Tuesday and Wednesday are planned for poster presentations, so these will not be available to make up time for long presentations.