

## **Animal Behavior Society Guide for Symposia and Invited Paper Sessions**

(First edition by Emilia Martins. First major revision by Jim Ha; previous revision by P. Stoddard. This revision February 2007 by J. Fewell)

A **symposium** should be a profound and stimulating review of an important subject area that is a major current focus, and is of general interest to the majority of ABS members. The symposium should emphasize current research advances, but also provide a thorough treatment of past work. Organization is important; a symposium is a synthesis of ideas, not a collection of papers on a similar topic. There should be a clear interconnection between presentations. Participants must be informed that individual papers should NOT emphasize original data, experimental protocol or particular research results; the goal is to achieve an overview and synthesis.

The length of individual presentations within the symposium may vary, but should be in increments of 15 min, to fit with the general program. Typically, 30 min is allowed for each speaker's presentation. Series of forty-five minute symposium presentations have not been well-received, and 15 min is generally too short a time to convey the depth needed for a good symposium talk. As exceptions, the symposium may begin or end with a longer key presentation or begin with a short introduction. Some symposia incorporate time for a panel discussion. The total length of the symposium may vary, from a morning or afternoon to a full day session. Symposia are often matched with meeting plenaries on a similar subject.

An **invited paper session** is a special grouping of papers that focus upon empirical results relating to a particular topic. Usually there is no all-encompassing historical-theoretical perspective, although the organizer(s) may wish to summarize the individual papers or arrange them according to some theme. Most talks within the invited paper session should be kept to 15 min. It is possible to add a few longer talks by key speakers, or a longer introductory talk. However, the total time allotted for the invited paper session should not exceed a morning or afternoon within the program.

### **To organize a symposium or invited paper session:**

- 1) Contact the Senior Program Officer, to make sure that there are no potential conflicts.
- 2) Prepare a pre-proposal and submit it to the Junior Program Officer. The pre-proposal should be a page summarizing your intent for the session, and suggesting potential participants. You do NOT need to have contacted or received an agreement to participate from these individuals. The junior and senior program officers will discuss the proposal and provide initial feedback.
- 3) Once you receive informal approval of your pre-proposal from the program officers, contact possible participants. Start immediately. There are many probable delays.

4) Prepare a full proposal using the guidelines suggested below. Submit the proposal to the current ABS Junior Program Officer. The deadline for submission will usually be 15 September of the year preceding that of the Annual Meeting at which the symposium or invited paper session is to be held (i.e., about 10 months in advance of the presentation date). The reason for this deadline is to allow members of the Executive Committee time to review proposals. Session proposals will be accepted after this date, but early submission allows the organizers of special sessions to inform their participants of the approval of the session in time to afford the best possible advance planning. Early submission also enhances the chances of final approval if the Executive Committee recommends some changes.

Use the following format in the proposal:

1) Begin with a statement of the importance of the topic, the scope to be covered and the goals of the session; note how the individual papers interconnect.

2) List the participants, with departmental and institutional affiliations and phone numbers.

3) List titles for the individual talks and give a brief summary (one-fourth to one half page) of each contribution, as written by the authors.

4) Provide a brief bibliography of relevant work in the area and by the participants.

5) Describe the structure of the session. Consult a past program to see how symposia are usually scheduled. Make sure you work with the program officers on this component to insure that your symposium will fit into the general program.

6) Intended audio- or video-taping during the special session must be cleared in advance by the ABS Executive Committee.

7) Publication of symposium proceedings or invited paper sessions is optional. Include information on any possible plans for publication in the proposal.

Your proposal should be completed and vetted by the program officers by October 1<sup>st</sup>. It will then be sent to the ABS Executive Committee. The EC reviews each proposal and selects those to be presented at an Annual Meeting based upon the following criteria: 1) timeliness and relevance, 2) the list of speakers, 3) completeness of the proposal, 4) coverage in recent ABS meetings, 5) space on the program. Your careful attention to points 1-4 above will increase the likelihood that the Committee will select your proposal for funding.

Generally, the ABS funds two to three symposia per meeting. If necessary, contact the Program Officer(s) or the ABS Central Office for specifics.

No funds are provided for Invited Paper Sessions, but information about these Sessions is publicized in the Newsletter and the Sessions are highlighted in the annual program.

You may also wish to consider presenting a symposium at the annual meeting of the SICB. The SICB holds its meetings just after Christmas in various regions of the country. The SICB Division of Animal Behavior is responsible for providing on symposium each year. Advantages of this route are possible publication in the American Zoologist, possible financial support from SICB, and a relatively diverse audience. If you are interested in this option, contact the ABS-SICB Liaison.

Organizers of special sessions may also wish to contact other possible funding sources, including:

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