Animal Behavior Society

Guide for Annual Meeting hosts

Updated June 2005 by Philip Stoddard

Based on earlier versions by
S. Altmann, T. Christenson, L. Drickamer, J. Ha, E. Martins, G. Michener, and S. Wilcox
(see Acknowledgements)

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This document is a guide for those who wish to or will host an Annual Meeting of the Animal Behavior Society. If you are interested read through this document carefully and begin discussing the possibilities with local colleagues, your conference and housing offices, or others who might be involved. Contact the ABS President and Program Officers to mention that you are interested. Note that 3 years prior to a meeting is not too early to start!

For most sites the basic pattern described below will apply. If you want to deviate significantly from this outline, please discuss your ideas with the ABS President, the ABS Program Officers, and other appropriate ABS officers. Keep consulting this document throughout our planning process as it contains information on all aspects of the meeting. Suggestions for improving the information in this guide are most welcome.

1. Suggested Timetable for Prospective Hosts (assuming a June meeting)

3-4 years prior to the intended meeting –

- begin discussing the possibilities with colleagues at your campus
- contact the ABS President and Senior Program Officer (SPO) to discuss the idea

Spring, 2 years prior to the intended meeting –

- develop a formal bid for the meetings, including a tentative budget and rough timetable. Consult with the ABS SPO about the details
- decide whether ABS Central Office Meeting software will be used to conduct on-line registration and/or abstract submission
- submit formal bid to the ABS President and SPO no later than May

Summer, 1 year prior to the intended meeting –

- finalize costs; fix registration and housing fees
- make a formal presentation at the ABS Annual Meeting (Executive Committee and Business Meeting)
- plan to spend at least 2 hours with the SPO at the annual meeting, going over the details
- discuss possibilities for a Keynote Speaker with SPO and ABS President
- make plans for the SPO to visit the meeting site

September/October, prior to the meeting –

- host SPO visit, show him/her session rooms and discuss all details
- create a brief description of the meeting for the newsletter and web site (give to SPO by early October). This should include prices. The SPO will provide information about the actual program schedule and a call for papers

  Division of website responsibility:

  1. Site & travel information (host)
  2. Registration (host)
  3. Housing (l host)
  4. Scientific Program (SPO & JPO)
  5. Abstract Submission (SPO & Shan)

  The default background should be white so that members can print pages without running out of ink or toner.
- develop the meeting logo

December, prior to the meeting –

- provide the JPO with a list of local businesses who may want to exhibit at the meeting
- set up in-house registration or prepare to use ABS Central Office software to accept registration and housing submissions
- create the full meeting invitation for the web page and the February ABS newsletter (give to SPO by early January). SPO will provide information about the scientific program
- work with JPO to ensure that all meeting information is on the meeting web pages and delivered to ABS Public Relations Committee for development of press releases

Early May, prior to meeting –

- create and mail an information packet to meeting vendors and exhibitors
- keep in touch with the SPO about any changes in room assignments
- provide the SPO with acknowledgments and other details for inclusion in the program

June, just prior to the meetings –

- put together local information for inclusion in registration packets
- receive meeting program and abstract booklets. Add to registration packets

- receive/create name tags and registration database. Train volunteers to work at registration.
- receive moderator information and list of cancellations from SPO and add to packets

Immediately before meetings –

- create message boards
- try out all AV equipment in the session rooms, train AV staff
- post signs to tell participants how to reach your site
- prepare Command Center and staff for on-site registration desk

2. Preparing a formal bid

a. Location and Timing. The Society attempts to select meeting sites that will accommodate its numbers (typically about 500 attendees) at a moderate cost that will enable participation by student members. In general, the best locations for cost as well as facilities are on college campuses. The Society attempts to select meeting sites in different portions of the continent from one year to the next, resulting in an interval of several years before a meeting is held again in a local region.

In recent years, each Annual Meeting has encompassed 5 days, starting with an evening social on the first day followed by 4 full days of sessions. (This is a change from past years in which meetings included 5 full days of sessions.) The Meeting usually begins with a gathering on Saturday evening and ends with an event on Wednesday evening, to take advantage of airline weekend fares.

Traditionally, ABS has tried to alternate meeting dates between early and late summer so that it doesn't always conflict with field seasons. Potential hosts should try to avoid dates in August that might conflict with the International Ethological Conference (in odd-numbered years, 2001, 2003) or the International Behavioral Ecology Congress (in even-numbered years, 2000, 2002). Also try to avoid the last two weeks of June, which are popular with many other societies (Evolution, Ecology, AOU, ASIH, ASM, etc.). The ABS Program Officers and President can help you identify potential conflicts with other society meetings.

b. Delegation of Host Tasks. Your campus may have a Conference Office that will assist in setting up and running the meeting. Most such offices are very helpful, but some Conference Offices are not, so check costs and services carefully. Keep in mind that the ABS Central Office has recently developed a web-based form for on-line registration and housing reservation, and a user-friendly software package to support it from your site. This system is available from the Society at a very low cost. Discuss the possibilities with the SPO and your Conference Office BEFORE signing a contract. Note that 3 years prior to a meeting is not too early to begin talking with a Conference Office about basic meeting arrangements!

In recent years, two (or sometimes three) local ABS members have co-hosted the annual meeting. Co-hosting is highly recommended because of unforeseen changes in situation (one host changed jobs between the bid and the meeting) or emergencies (one host had an appendectomy 2 days before the meeting started; the sudden death of a participant at one meeting required one host to be off-campus arranging body shipment at the time of the opening keynote session). The task of the local host(s) is greatly ameliorated if other colleagues on campus can assist. These colleagues frequently include graduate and undergraduate students as well as other faculty, and they may come from more than one department. Hosting a meeting is a large task, but it can be made much easier by clearly defining all aspects, establishing subcommittees (see Section XVIV), and then delegating tasks to these subcommittees. A cautionary note here, however: delegation works best when one or two local hosts maintain constant contact with all subcommittees and keep tabs on all details!

You might consider combining duties into the following delegated roles, some of which may be conducted by a Conference Office:

1. **Vendor contact**. In charge of putting together an information packet for meeting exhibitors, receiving vendor materials that are mailed in advance, helping vendors to set up their wares, ensuring that vendor room is locked and that vendor needs are addressed during the meeting.
2. **Housing coordinator**. Serves as liaison with housing services, accepts housing information from the ABS CO software or other on-line reservation service and keeps track of housing registration and organizes check-in, arranges childcare options, works out access to swimming

pool and/or other recreational areas, provides an emergency contact telephone number for during the meetings.

3. **Social and food coordinator**. Plans social events, including the opening picnic, closing banquet, poster sessions, academic karaoke, student reception and any other events. Chooses food for these events and for refreshment breaks. Makes arrangements for the EC welcome dinner and Saturday meeting. Arranges music for closing banquet.
4. **Printing coordinator**. Organizes creation of the logo. Arranges for printing of t-shirts, mugs and/or bags. Puts together information for meeting packets, including lists of local restaurants, hotels, last minute changes, and moderator info. Receives meeting program and abstract booklet, also to be included in these packets.
5. **Bookkeeper and registration coordinator**. Pays the bills and makes sure the meeting stays on budget. Keeps track of housing and registration information as it comes in, transferring it to the appropriate person, as necessary. Trains volunteers to work at registration desk. Deals with last minute crises and phone calls during the meetings.
6. **AV and Transportation specialist**. Serves as liaison with travel agencies and airlines. Arranges for appropriate AV equipment. Trains volunteer AB staff. Troubleshoots AV during the meeting.

c. Submitting the Bid

A formal bid for hosting the meetings should be submitted to the ABS President and Senior Program Officer no later than May about 2 years before the planned meeting. The bid should include proposed dates, prices, and a detailed description of the meeting site. It should be the result of many conversations with your local colleagues, conference and housing offices, and the ABS Program Officers. It is also very helpful to talk with previous meeting hosts.

Your document should be 2-4 pages single-spaced. All basic arrangements for housing, meals, and rooms for the various sessions should be outlined, as well as tentative but well-thought-out, realistic costs (see below). Include a map of the campus indicating key buildings for meetings, meals, accommodation, and parking. List local people who will assist you and discuss whether you have a Conference Office on your campus and what role the office will play in helping to stage the meeting. Describe any special social events that might work well, and any other noteworthy aspects of your situation and meeting site.

Once the President and Senior Program Officer have received your bid, they may invite you to make a brief presentation to the ABS Executive Committee (EC) at the Annual Meeting that summer (usually the day before the sessions begin). The EC will consider your bid and immediately inform you of its decision. One year prior to the meeting you will host, you should plan to attend the annual meeting so that you can make a second presentation to the EC and provide a formal invitation to the membership at the Business Meeting and perhaps at the Banquet.

d. Estimating Registration Fees:

To estimate registration fees, use the Excel spreadsheet provided, entering numbers that correspond to your local costs. Note that all prices are in US dollars (not Canadian).

ABS will provide:

- Solicitation, scheduling and coordination of ALL meeting events including regular talks, plenaries, symposia, and evening workshops. ABS SPO will provide you with the necessary information about the scientific content of the meeting for invitation materials.

- Free development of the Program and Abstract booklets. Printing and delivery costs will be billed to you. ABS makes every effort to identify inexpensive and high-quality publishers, and the JPO can give you an estimate of the cost. If you prefer, arrangements can be made to send materials to your preferred local printer, but you should discuss this with the JPO as early as possible
- Free printing of the Meeting Invitations in the November and February ABS Newsletters
- Honoraria for Fellows lectures (usually about $600 per meeting), President's Choice lecturer, and other plenary speakers. You will be asked to waive registration fees for these speakers. Note that expenses for the Keynote speaker are the responsibility of the meeting host.
- Allee Award ($250), Founders' Award ($100), Film Award ($250), Genesis Award ($100), Latin American Travel awards, and Ethnic Diversity awards. ABS makes all arrangements for solicitation of applications and distribution of these awards.
- Funding for symposia and other special events (arranged through the SPO and approved by the EC; usually about $4000-6000+)
- Exhibitors and vendors for the meeting. The JPO will set prices and solicit reservations from potential publishers and other vendors. The ABS Central Office will collect payment and then forward these funds directly to the meeting host (varies between $4000-$8000). Sent books are charged one-quarter table fee, and set up and take down is done in exchange for donation of the books. Under no circumstances will we (ABS/Host) pack up and ship books back. Registration stuffing is done at no charge by Local Host (assuming no copying/printing charges), but decision as to appropriateness is made by JPO.

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- Free hosting of web pages containing the Meeting Invitation information. Meeting hosts may also create their own web pages which will be linked to the ABS site.

ALL other costs are entirely the responsibility of the host. The Society provides no financial backing in the event of a financial loss so investigate insurance options. Costs must be calculated carefully so as to keep registration to a minimum compatible with encouraging participation by students and others with limited resources, yet allowing a cushion in the event of unanticipated expenses or low registration. ABS does not expect the host to profit personally from organizing an annual meeting. By custom, and because ABS members provide the largest source of revenues via their registration fees, a significant portion of any surplus funds is often donated to the Society. In recent years, such surpluses have usually been directed to the Research Grants account. The host is required to submit a final budget to the Executive Committee at the following year's annual meeting, with an indication of the disbursement of surplus funds.

Possible sources of income:

1. registration fees
2. housing and food fees
3. sale of T-shirts
4. vendor exhibits ($7425 in 1998, $4505 in 1999, $7625 in 2000)
5. fees for special social events - picnics, banquet, drinks at functions
6. funds obtained from the host institution (department, dean, president), often for speakers
7. fees for special excursions, shuttle bus or other services (if any)
8. rebate monies from the designated travel agency
9. contributions from local companies or restaurants (e.g., drinks or food)

Expected expenditures:

1. food and beverages for:
   - EC dinner on Friday prior to EC meeting
   - executive committee meetings:
     - continental breakfast, morning and afternoon breaks for EC on Saturday
     - lunch for EC on Saturday
   - opening social event ("picnic")
   - poster/movie/social sessions
   - refreshment breaks (coffee/tea/juice; snacks)
   - Allee dinner (informal dinner for judges and participants the night before the Allee presentations)
   - closing ceremony or banquet
2. helpers:
   - to handle on-site check-in and to run errands
   - to run slide and video projectors
   - secretarial help
   - fees charged by your conference office and perhaps by an office which keeps charge of your accounts
3. equipment and supplies:
   - audio-video equipment and/or poster stand rental (if necessary)
   - folders for registration materials, other office supplies
   - assorted postage and telephone costs
   - payment for logo design
   - plastic mugs and/or bags with logo for use during meetings
4. travel and lodging for Senior Program Officer during site visit (in September of previous year, usually covered by a local department as a seminar visit).
5. keynote speaker(s) - all costs, including travel, housing, registration, banquet and honorarium
6. registration fees for:
   - plenary speakers
   - symposium speakers who are not members of the society
   - meeting exhibitors, who get one free registration per rented space
   - local student helpers (optional)
7. one free exhibit table and two free registrations for federal funding agencies (NSF and NIH)
8. free banquet tickets for W. C. Allee Award participants (maximum of 18)
9. printing of:
   - Program and Abstract booklets (ABS will produce and make arrangements for the booklets to be printed, and then bill you for the cost.)
   - materials for inclusion in the registration packet, e.g. restaurant guide
   - signs for directing conferees to and around the campus
10. cost of excursions or shuttle service - gas and driver costs, etc.
11. "hidden" costs sometimes charged by University/College Comptroller's Office; in the past, these costs have amounted to 4% of campus fees!

To calculate registration fees, begin by summing all projected expenses and subtracting all non-registration sources of income. Divide the resulting difference by the minimum expected

attendance (375-400, in recent years). This predicted average cost per participant can now be used to develop a registration fee structure for the meetings.

The fee structure should consist of four levels (regular ABS member, student ABS member, nonmember, spouse/guest) and three time periods (early, late, and on-site). Consult the registration fees from the past several years as a general guide. The difference between member and non-member rates should be slightly greater than the regular ABS membership dues to encourage participants to join ABS, while not discouraging non-member participation. You may also want to include a policy about refunds and special situations. Guests and meeting exhibitors need not receive the abstract booklet. Press passes must include the abstract booklet.

It has long been ABS policy that all full members should pay the full registration fee, even if they plan to attend only part of the meeting. Nevertheless, you should also create a category of "single-day participant" for special situations. In the past, hosts have invited the staff of local zoos, students from the local community college, or others to attend a single day of the meeting at a reduced cost. In particular, ABS asks the host to make these special passes available to local K-12 teachers.

The deadline for early registration should be set with the abstract submission deadline (April/May). Most of those who pre-register will do so in the final two weeks prior to this deadline. Previous hosts have found that as many as 10% of the total numbers attending may register after the early registration deadline, including on site at the conference.

To help keep registration fees down, negotiate with your university/college conference services that they not retain amounts collected in excess of expenses, even if they agree to provide some subsidy or cover losses, should any occur. A large surplus after a meeting, e.g. over $1200, would indicate that you overcharged for registration or underestimated registration numbers.

e. Estimating housing and meal costs

Note that the above costs and expenses do not include housing and meals. We highly recommend that you have a separate campus organization (e.g., the Conference Office) handle housing and meals and that you keep accounts for registration separate. If possible, meals and accommodation should be arranged so that participants pay only for the days they attend.

Ideally, dormitory rooms should be located within a five-minute walk of the eating facilities and rooms used for sessions. Linens, blankets, pillows, towels, soap and cups should be provided in each room. Preferably, dorms should have categorized as non-smoking or smoking, and offer air-conditioning where local weather dictates. They should also include areas that will be "quiet" after a certain hour, and if possible, be close to internet access. Ensure that you have arrangements for those arriving after regular registration hours to obtain their room keys. Where possible a flexible meal plan should be made available, usually in a designated cafeteria or section of a cafeteria for exclusive use by the ABS conferees. Use of a cafeteria facilitates discussion and interaction.

In making your plans, tally the number of single and double rooms available, but anticipate that the number of conferees who want a room to themselves may exceed the number of single rooms. Because many campuses have primarily double rooms but most participants prefer not to share, a total number of beds available based upon a count of double rooms will be inaccurate when assigning rooms. Separate the charges for meals from those for rooms; ideally, provide maximum

flexibility by allowing registrants to sign up in advance for each individual meal. Indicate whether or not the cafeteria accepts walk-ins on a per meal basis.

If possible, make sure that special daily housing and meal rates are available for those who want to stay one extra day before or after the meeting. For example, members of the EC meet for one full day before the paper sessions begin and will need an extra night's accommodation. Because of current airline fare structures and/or planned pre- or post-conference excursions or other meetings, other participants may also stay over an extra night before or after the meeting. Also, if possible, set a later deadline for payment of housing and meals than for registration fees. Students, and others with limited means may ask to pre-register, but defer payment of room and meals until nearer to the meeting time.

f. Other special paid events

Alcohol. The issue of whether alcohol is served or permitted on a campus should not be a determining factor in deciding where the meeting will be held. However, where possible provisions should be made for serving alcohol and other beverages at the social/poster/movie sessions and prior to the banquet. You should discuss any unusual problems in this regard with the EC, which often can make useful suggestions when there is a problem with serving alcohol on campus.

Welcome Picnic. The custom at most recent ABS meetings has been to have a picnic on the evening before the opening of the meetings. Picnics have varied from barbecues to standard picnics to trips to a local spot. Vegetarian options must be available. Provide for having picnics indoors in case of rain. Sign-ups should be on the registration forms sent in the invitation and on the web. Tickets for the picnic should be sold at the actual cost, and this cost should be kept as low as possible to encourage student attendance. Make sure you collect tickets during the event itself.

Closing celebration/Banquet. A closing dinner is required on the final evening of the meetings. The banquet hall should seat at least 250 persons, although attendance will vary depending on the cost. We have found that an on-campus banquet proceeded by an hour of cash bar and followed by dancing works best. A vegetarian option must be offered, and it has become customary for one free drink to be included in the cost of a banquet ticket. A served banquet is much preferred to buffet-style, where people often wait in long lines for extended periods, so that some people finish eating before others get their food. Served banquets also avoid the problems of monitoring two separate buffet lines with different types of food (one for vegetarians, one for carnivores). The EC prefers open seating to a head table, given the egalitarian nature of the ABS. A good public address system should be provided for announcements of awards, for brief speeches by ABS officers and for the banquet speaker (if there is one). A banquet speaker is **not** recommended, and must be approved by the ABS Senior Program Officer. If a speaker is engaged, the presentation should be brief (definitely not more than 20 minutes), very entertaining, and on a topic of general interest. To avoid disruption, have the banquet speaker talk in the same room as the banquet.

The local host is responsible for all arrangements for the banquet. The price should be modest so that students can afford to attend, and in all cases you should bargain for the best meal for the money. Some hotels that serve banquets charge excessively and often do not provide the best food or service. Banquet tickets should reflect the cost of the actual food as closely as possible, and banquet tickets should be collected at the event itself. Bear in mind that the cost of a banquet speaker must be covered by either the local host budget or in revenue from banquet tickets. In recent years, some hosts have experimented with incorporating the cost of the closing dinner into

the regular meal plans. In this case, make sure extra tickets are available for those who do not register for the meal plan. Free banquet tickets must be provided for the Allee Award participants.

Tours and Excursions. If there are local sites of importance or interest such as museums, zoos, or research stations, you may wish to arrange for tours, lasting one or more days, to such facilities immediately before or after the meeting. Such tours (except those designed for spouses) should be coordinated with the ABS Senior Program Officer to ensure that they do not conflict with the regular meeting program. Previous spouse tours have been geological, historical, cultural or commercial (shopping) in nature. You may prefer to advertise tours offered by local agencies. Beware of becoming a tour agent, which could interfere with conducting the myriad of other duties involved in running an Annual Meeting.

3. Formal invitation to ABS membership

With the arrival of the electronic age, most members access meeting information from the meeting web page. This web page is produced by the ABS Program Officers and Central Office using information provided by the local host, and may include links to web pages produced by the local hosts themselves. Initial information for the web page and Newsletter (including meeting highlights and prices) must be given to the Junior Program Officer no later than early October. A longer invitation (1-2 pages) should then be delivered to the Program Officers in December to be published in the February Newsletter. The ABS SPO will produce and include the Call for Papers and any information about the actual content of the meetings.

Consider providing the following information either in the invitation or the web page:

a) a brief overview of the meetings, including any special events, tours, and the like
b) information on transportation, including
   - contact information for the designated travel agency and/or airline
   - name of nearest airports and information on how to reach the meeting site from the airport. Include specific information such as taxi company phone numbers, locations of shuttle buses, and estimated costs of these services.
   - information on train/bus service to your area
   - driving directions to the registration area, dorms, and parking. Include information on any parking fees that will be charged. Note that vendors will need parking spaces near the display space.
   - a campus map identifying all meeting sites and designated parking lots. If long walks are involved comment on nighttime safety and suggest security precautions.
c) information on childcare options, usually the phone numbers, daily fees and sign-up procedures for a local Childcare agency.
d) location and times for registration and check-in at dormitories. Indicate how late arrivers can obtain room keys. Also include information on what materials (e.g. reading lamp, telephone, blankets), services (e.g. room cleaning), and facilities (e.g. washing machines, irons) are available in the rooms and in the dormitory complex.
e) a list of local motels, hotels, and campgrounds (with rates)
f) any other information that will help participants enjoy your venue, such as information on weather conditions and local attractions.

g) information on how a conferee can be contacted in the event of an emergency during the course of the meeting. An address and one or more telephone numbers that can be called at night and on weekends should be included.

4. Registration book-keeping and confirmation.
The Central Office has developed a user-friendly conference registration system (as well as an abstract submission system for use of the SPO), hosted on the Society's web site but managed, updated and reported from the Local Host's institution. This system is recommended but not required. A charge to the Local Host of $3/registrant will be made to support the CO manpower and server requirements.

If the host chooses to make alternative arrangements for registration and housing, he/she should discuss this option with the Program Officers early, if it is preferred.

5. Rooms and AV equipment
The following types of rooms are needed:

a) **Large lecture hall** - capacity of 400-600 persons, to be used for the plenary speakers (Keynote, Fellows, President's Choice), the ABS Business Meeting, and any special evening lectures. Ideally this should be available throughout the meetings.
b) **Medium-sized lecture halls** - at least 4 halls with capacity of 150-250 persons for contributed paper sessions and symposia (see below for guidelines on room design). Often one of these is the large lecture hall that is then scheduled with the Allee session and Symposia.
c) **Movie theater** - seating 200 or more (may be the large lecture hall or one of the bigger medium-sized lecture halls) for film competition on two evenings.
d) **Poster Sessions/Social room** - large enough to accommodate up to 150 posters with adequate space between poster boards for the audience to circulate without undue crowding. Preferably this space should be available throughout the meeting or, at the very least, for 2-3 days so that posters can be viewed for a period longer than that nominally assigned in the program. In particular, the posters entered in the Founders' Memorial and Genesis Awards should be available for judging over at least a 1-day period. The poster session space should accommodate:
   - easels or other similar frames for mounting posters (ensure that the Program Officer knows the size and orientation of poster boards so that it can be included with the invitation materials). All frames for the Founders' Award should be of identical size and orientation.
   - tables and chairs arranged for discussion/conversation
   - a set of tables that can be used for serving food and beverages; it has become customary to have "wine and cheese" available during at least one evening of the movies/poster sessions. The food and drink helps make these sessions into socials as well. It is customary to provide one free drink in addition to a cash bar.
e) **Space for meeting exhibitors/vendors**. You will probably need space for 10-20 exhibitors throughout the meetings. Each exhibitor has rented an 8'x10' space with two tables. Preferably this space will be near the poster sessions, paper sessions, break rooms and other high traffic areas. The rooms should have electrical outlets, internet access, and the possibility of being securely locked overnight.
f) **Slide Preparation Room**. A small room near the contributed paper session rooms should be set aside with a slide projector and screen for those who wish to test their slides prior to

presentations. Empty slide carousels should also be made available both in this room and in the rooms where talks will be held. Most speakers will not bring their own carousels.

g) **Rooms for Workshops & Discussions**. These are needed in late afternoon/early evening for group meetings like the NSF question/answer session, meeting with the American Editor of Animal Behaviour, and for any other groups. In most cases, these workshops can be held in the contributed paper session rooms.
h) **Executive Committee meetings**. The executive committee will meet for one full day before the regular ABS meetings and often again for one or two evenings later in the week. They will need a seminar room that seats about 30 people comfortably and which is near where food will be provided during their meeting.

Session Room Requirements. Each room used for lectures or contributed paper/symposium presentations should have:

a) two slide projectors with (preferably cordless) remote controls and spare projector bulbs
b) overhead projector
c) video projection capabilities
d) computer and projection screen hook-ups for PowerPoint-style presentations. To avoid last minute problems, specify exactly what type of computer and storage drives will be available so that the Program Officer can include this with the Call For Papers.
e) a screen located to permit easy access for the speaker and large enough to display slides in both vertical and horizontal orientations
f) variable light controls for room lighting or multiple banks of lights that permit the screen area to be darkened while leaving the audience with sufficient light to take notes. Rooms must have lighting options other than total darkness and total light
g) a podium with a light that is not so bright that it interferes with viewing slides and which can be turned off if the speaker so desires
h) a microphone (preferably a clip-on mike with remote pick up, to avoid dragging cords) and speakers. For speakers who do not like to be trapped at a mounted microphone on the podium, supply neck or clip-on microphones
i) a pitcher of water and cups or glasses
j) a laser pointer (preferably battery powered, to avoid dragging cords) AND a stick pointer
k) a blackboard with chalk and eraser
l) a timer for the session chair and two signs (at least 8x11 inches) saying “5 mins.” and “2 mins.”
m) a trained projectionist to run the slide projector, VCR, and other AV equipment
n) tweezers for the projectionist to use in freeing trapped slides
o) rear entry so people may come and depart during a talk without disturbing the speaker; where there are two entrances (e.g. back and side), they should be clearly marked on the outside to indicate which one to use while a talk is in progress.
p) minimum noise from corridor traffic and refreshment breaks when sessions are in progress.
q) notices with cancellations and changes for a given session on both sides of the doors to all entrances to that room (so they can be read both when the door is closed during a presentation and open between presentations) and on a blackboard inside the room

6. Vendors and Exhibits

A good vendor display is a major asset of any meeting as well as a source of revenue. Although the Junior Program Officer (JPO) is responsible for signing up vendors and collecting fees, it is also a

good idea to have one person at the local site who is responsible for coordinating efforts with the JPO and interacting with vendors during the meeting itself. This person needs to:

a) Provide information to the JPO on the location of space relative to session rooms and refreshment break site, placement of electrical outlets, and availability of internet connections. This information is needed no later than early November before the meetings.
b) Provide the JPO with the names and addresses of any local vendors who might be interested in participating.
c) Ensure security for the displays. The room for book and vendor displays must be locked at night and all times when the display is not open. Vendors will not want to take their materials down and set up again each day. Talk with campus security about arrangements. The room should be located for maximum traffic by participants while still ensuring security of stock.
d) Ensure that the vendors are in the best possible location. As far as possible, the room should provide for easy traffic, should be near the refreshment break site, and should be comfortable (include some lounge chairs). Provide the JPO with a map that can be sent to vendors showing the layout of the room.
e) Arrange for shipping. Vendors often wish to ship books/equipment in advance. The host must decide how the vendors' requests will be accommodated (e.g. storage and delivery of items to the vendor room). Provide the JPO with details on shipping instructions and other arrangements for advance delivery of display items.
f) Parking and room access: vendors require easy access to the room to allow them to set up tables. Ensure that parking permits are available.
g) Taxes and licenses: the host must establish whether institutional policy permits items to be sold on site and whether temporary licenses are required for vendors. Inform vendors of local tax regulations.
h) Put together an information sheet for vendors including the following information and give it to the JPO to be sent to the vendors before the meetings:
   - Inform vendors of set-up and take-down times.
   - If the meeting includes any time off (not normal in a 5-day ABS meeting), vendors must be forewarned as attendance will be minimal at such times.
   - Inform vendors of exact table size and whether tables will be draped.
   - Electrical outlets must be available to equipment vendors. Internet connections are also often appreciated.
   - Inform vendors of the availability of wall space beside or behind the table should they wish to mount displays.
i) Assist vendors at meeting. We have found that it is best to include one free registration with each space rented to a vendor. Each vendor pays for an 8'x10' space that should be clearly delineated with lines on the floor. When each vendor arrives, they will need to be directed to the exhibit rooms and helped with any special set-up needs.

7. Executive Committee arrangements

The ABS Executive Committee (EC) and the Chairs of Standing Committees (CSC) gather several times during the annual meeting for special sessions. They begin by meeting for one full day before registration begins, and then gather again for one or two evenings during the meeting. The following arrangements should be made for them (days refer to a meeting with regular sessions starting on Sunday):

a) **Early check-in.** The EC and CSC arrive a day earlier than other participants, and will need to obtain room keys as early as Friday.
b) **Welcome dinner.** An informal buffet dinner with cocktails for the EC and CSC has become traditional (though not required) for the Friday evening preceding the meeting. This can be at the house of the local host or at the faculty club or other suitable location. An invitation should be sent to all EC and CSC members (names and addresses can be obtained from the ABS Central Office), including those who have been most recently elected and will be attending the meeting as observers. The invitation should indicate time and place with directions. Request a reply, including information on (1) what time the person is arriving in town to facilitate check-in at the dorm, (2) whether the person will be driving a car and can help with transportation to the home of the local host, and (3) whether there are any special meal requirements. These occasions have proven very useful for meeting new members of the group and for doing preliminary business prior to the EC meeting.
c) **A large seminar room** should be provided for the Saturday, all-day EC meeting and for at least one additional evening during the week (Tues. or Weds.). It should accommodate up to 40 persons, although only 25-30 will be present at one time. A big airy room with a group of tables arranged in a rectangle with chairs around the outside is preferred. The Saturday meeting usually begins before 9:00am, often going through the day and ending prior to the Opening Event ("picnic").
d) **Special registration.** As EC members are in committee throughout Saturday, they cannot register in the usual manner. Arrange to have the registration packets for all persons attending the EC meeting brought to the EC meeting room. Any additional fees can be collected from those attending the meeting as the packets are passed out.
e) **Meals and Refreshments.**
   - **Coffee/tea/juice** and possibly some light refreshments should be provided before the Saturday meeting begins and at the morning and afternoon breaks.
   - **Lunch** should also be provided on Saturday, usually as a 45-minute break in the middle of a long day. This should be a light lunch served in a room close to the site of the meeting or in the meeting room itself.
   - The second EC meeting, if required at all, is frequently at a meal on Tuesday or Wednesday. Options should be prepared for a quiet room with food, perhaps at a nearby restaurant, for about 15 people.

8. Meeting Set-up

Registration packet. A registration packet should be handed to each person on arrival at the registration desk. About 30-50 extra registration packets should be prepared for those who register on site. The packet should contain:

a) a copy of the final bill with charges that have been paid and any outstanding charges.
b) an envelope containing any special tickets for picnics, banquet, excursions
c) a name tag. These will be provided by the ABS Central Office if they are asked to handle on-line registration.
d) maps of the campus and the local area
e) the printed Abstract booklet and Meeting Program (provided by the ABS Program Officers)
f) any brochures on local sites or attractions obtained from a travel or tourist bureau or the chamber of commerce
g) the addendum containing last minute Program changes as supplied by the Program Officers

h) a general information sheet containing local rules or regulations, a telephone number for conveying messages to the Message Board, information on local medical and emergency facilities (with addresses and phone numbers), on child care, athletic facilities, and meal hours
i) a list of local restaurants and night spots, especially those which have dancing and/or live music
j) information for moderators (provided by the ABS Program Officers)

Audio-Visual Staff. Projectionists should be trained thoroughly (usually 1-2 hours 1-2 days before the meetings will suffice) on all procedures and practices associated with the equipment they will operate, including videotape, movies and computer projection equipment. Projectionists should be present 15 minutes before the start their sessions and they should remain for 10-15 minutes after the last talk. They should be given clear advice on how to handle emergency situations, including how to replace projector light bulbs, what to do with slides that get stuck in carousel cartridges during a talk, and also where to return slides that are left behind after a session. Ideally a second person should be available in each room to run for assistance in the event of a major equipment problem. If light dimmers and switches are located at the back of the room (i.e. away from the session chair and the projectionist), a second person will be needed to operate these lights. Ideally, AV personnel will try out the entire system in each room before the sessions begin to diagnose and eliminate any small problems.

NOTE: With a Sunday start to sessions, local audio-visual personnel may not be on campus to solve problems on the first day of presentations. Double check that all equipment and facilities are working before A-V personnel leave for the weekend.

Message Boards. Two message boards should be maintained near the Registration Desk, and/or at a central, convenient locality. One board should be dedicated to conference announcements (e.g. times and locations of workshops and committee meetings; times and locations of departures on special tours). The second board should contain general information (e.g. incoming telephone messages; messages between participants; job announcements). There should be a mechanism for telephone messages to be put on the board, through a phone number and address announced in the Invitation and the Newsletters. Some hosts have provided an emergency telephone near the registration desk/messages board also, with appropriate measures taken against unauthorized outgoing long-distance calls. The boards' locations should be clearly and frequently announced. If the boards are moved during the meeting, be sure to post and to announce new locations clearly.

Signs. Large signs should be posted on the streets and campus to help participants who are driving to locate the registration and dorm check-in areas. Signs should also be used to locate and identify each of the session rooms, slide prep room, and computer access areas. If there is a back entrance to the room, post a sign on any front or side entrances directing people to the back entrance so that they can avoid interrupting the speaker. A copy of the last minute changes and cancellations should also be posted on each of the doors to session rooms.

9. Liaison with the ABS Program Officers

The Senior Program Officer (SPO) is the main person within ABS who will help you to organize the meetings. The SPO is responsible for coordinating the various people sponsoring special events at the meeting and for structuring the program. Coordination between the SPO and host is essential to ensure that the appropriate types and numbers of rooms are available for each

event. The SPO is also in charge of the Call for Papers (included in the invitation materials). The Junior Program Officer will solicit exhibitors for the meetings and coordinate the meeting web pages that allow members to register and submit abstracts electronically. You should be in constant contact with both POs for at least one year prior to the meeting. You should also maintain close contact with the ABS Central Office. In the event of differences of opinion between the POs and the local host, the ABS President should be asked to arbitrate.

Here are some of the main ways in which you should interact with the POs:

a) **At the meeting preceding your own.** Plan to be at this meeting, and to spend at least two hours going over your preparations with the SPO. The SPO can detail the steps that must be gone through during the year and answer any questions you might have. The SPO can also tell you about any special events that are being scheduled, discuss AV and room requirements, and offer suggestions on any anticipated difficulties. You should also discuss possibilities for the Keynote speaker, and schedule the SPO's September visit to the meeting site.
b) **September**: It is very important that the SPO visit the meeting site during September of the year before the meeting is to be held. This visit is extremely important, as it allows the SPO to assess the site first hand, make suggestions about critical details, and help you avoid common pitfalls. In the past, local hosts have invited the SPO to give a research seminar during their visit, taking advantage of departmental resources to cover airfare and lodging costs. Others have received free airfare for the SPO in negotiations with travel agencies for "designated airline" status. You should be prepared to show the SPO the session rooms, dorms, and any other facilities that will be used during the meetings. Provide the SPO with campus maps, including detailed maps of each building containing session rooms and information about their AV capabilities. Also make arrangements for the SPO to meet with your local conference organizers or any other people who will be helping you to host the meetings. If possible, plan to have lunch at the same cafeteria facilities to be used during the meetings. You should also have time to go over your budget with the SPO, and discuss deadlines throughout the year. Reserve at least one full day for these activities.
c) **Early October**: A brief description of meeting highlights (1-2 paragraphs) and the final registration and housing prices should be given to the SPO in early October for it to be included in the November newsletter and incorporated into the meeting web page. The SPO will add the Call for Papers, information about plenary speakers and symposia, and make sure the information is transmitted to the ABS secretary and webmaster. This information should be updated frequently.
d) **Early November:** Provide the JPO with details for the meeting vendors, including
   - a local contact person who will be responsible for helping with vendors
   - a map of the room in which vendors will be housed, showing locations of display spaces, power outlets and internet connections
   - an address to which vendor materials can be mailed in advance of the meetings
   - estimated cost for vendors if they would like to hire a student to help with their display
e) **Mid December**: The full 1-2 page description of the meeting (including logo, travel information, etc.) should be given to the SPO in electronic form for inclusion in the February ABS Newsletter. The SPO will include information about the meeting schedule, and how to register for the meetings and housing on the web page. On-line registration and housing reservation should be available no later than early January.

f) **Late April:** Abstracts will be due and the SPO will begin to put together the final program schedule. From this point on, the SPO needs to receive regular (e.g., weekly) reports from you on any room or scheduling changes that may have occurred.
g) **Early May:** Provide the PO with an electronic copy of the logo and acknowledgment information to be included in the published program. The program will be published and mailed to you one or two weeks before the meeting itself.
h) At or just before the meeting: The PO will provide you with a list of last minute cancellations and changes to the program that should be included with the registration materials for all meeting participants, and posted on the doors of each session room. The PO will also provide you with information for about 40 session moderators that will need to be placed in the registration packets for those individuals.

10. Miscellaneous

Refreshment breaks. There are 8 refreshment breaks scheduled in the normal ABS 4-day-long program. These are at midmorning and midafternoon on Sunday through Wednesday. At each break, hot and cold beverages (coffee, tea and juice/punch) should all be available. Providing a snack (doughnuts, cookies) is customary, especially at the morning break, but should be examined from a cost perspective. The breaks should be ready at exactly the time scheduled and, where possible, the food and beverages should be available 20-30 minutes before and after the scheduled period.

Official Travel Agency. It is usually a good idea to confer with one or more local travel agencies about designating an official travel agency for the conference. The designated agency usually rebates to the local host a percentage of the business generated by conferees. The travel agency may also suggest that the local host designate an official airline. Usually this designation means that conferees using the designated agency and airline will be guaranteed the lowest available rates. Experiences with this type of arrangement have generally been positive. The income rebate from the travel agency can be used to offset various costs, e.g. the airfare of the keynote speaker. In some cases the travel agency may also be willing to assist in arrangements for transportation of conferees from the airport to the conference site.

Plenary speakers. It is the privilege of the local host to select one or two Keynote Speakers for the Annual Meeting in consultation with the ABS President and Senior Program Officer. The Senior PO will then invite the Keynote Speaker in a formal letter. A listing of previous plenary speakers is available with this guide. The local host is responsible for all arrangements and costs for the Keynote Speaker(s). The honorarium paid to Keynote Speakers in recent years has varied from $150-300. It may be possible to obtain institutional or foundation funds to help provide for the Keynote Speaker(s). Local hosts have also included these costs in their calculations for the registration fee. The ABS Senior Program Officer is responsible for all invitations and arrangements for the Fellow's Lectures and any other special plenary sessions.

Logo. A logo for the meeting should be designed in the fall preceding the Annual Meeting. Examination of recent issues of the Meeting Program might provide some ideas. The logo will be used for the front of the Program, for the front cover of the Abstracts booklet, on T-shirts that are

produced for the meeting, and possibly on stationary that is printed for the local host's use. You may wish to pay a colleague or artist (ca. $50-100) for creating the design.

T-Shirts. It is customary though not obligatory to have T-shirts with the meeting logo on them available at the Annual Meeting. There are three models from which to work. (1) People order their T-shirts when they submit their registration forms and include payment at that time. The T-shirts are then prepared and ready when registrants arrive at the meeting. (2) The cost of one T-shirt/conferee is built into the cost of registration and that shirt is issued at registration. Information on size and color choices will be required on the registration form in either case. (3) The local host estimates the numbers of shirts of various sizes that will be sold in the course of the meeting and purchases these in advance. It is sometimes possible to have the Conference Center make the initial investment, or an outside individual may wish to make the T-shirt venture an economic one, removing the local host's financial responsibility.

Mugs, bag or meeting gift. In recent years, meeting hosts have provided all registrants with an extra gift, also printed with the meeting logo. Consider providing a re-usable cup/mug (which can be labeled individually) to each participant. Such mugs can be used during the refreshment breaks and social events, and provide an environmentally friendly alternative to styrofoam or other disposable cups. A cloth bag is also handy for carrying around meeting materials. Other hosts have considered a meeting poster or other gift that would help meeting participants remember their experiences for years to come.

Insurance. You must check to be sure there is insurance available to cover liability during the meeting. The Animal Behavior Society does not provide insurance coverage. One means of providing insurance has been to have the department to which the hosts belong sponsor the meeting. This may mean that the blanket liability insurance policy of the hosting institution will cover liability for the meeting. Check with the campus lawyer for this possibility.

Animal Misbehaviour. Although not a regular feature of the Annual Meeting because of the work involved, a satiric version of Animal Behaviour is good fun and readily sells many copies. The last issue was in 1987.

Childcare. Some provision should be made for childcare. Some local hosts have used a local Child Care Agency, or provided contact information for local babysitters. Insurance concerns may make it difficult to hire responsible people to work for the duration of the conference. Information, daily fees, and sign-up regarding numbers and ages of children that require childcare should be on the registration form in the invitation packet and ABS Newsletters.

Handicap Access. Every effort should be made to make all aspects of the meeting accessible to those with impaired mobility or vision.

Publicity. It is increasingly important to publicize ABS meetings and their nature to the public, and to invite the public to participate. The ABS Public Relations committee will produce a press release about the meeting and can help you to inform local news agencies about the event. Recently, the ABS Applied Animal Behavior Committee has also been sponsoring a special public lecture or demonstration by ABS members that might be of interest to the local community.

Consider ways in which you might advertise the meetings locally. The local Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Centers are often very helpful and should also be contacted. At some meetings, Visitor Centers have helped at the Registration Desk.

11. Acknowledgments

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