



Empowering the Endorsers: Developing Competitive Scientific Session Proposals

**(Hosted by the Scientific
Program Committee)**

February 21, 2017

Welcome!

We will begin at 1:00 PM ET



Sound Quality

For today's Webinar you have 2 choices for Audio

via audio broadcast

The Audio Broadcast will connect automatically and the Audio Broadcast panel will appear. Listen through your computer speakers or headset.



via telephone

Select the **phone icon** below the participants list. Dial in using the specified phone number, event number, and your **attendee ID**. Phone lines will be muted.



To send questions or comments, use the **Q&A** panel.

Please note that this Webinar will be recorded.

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Discussion Instructions

- If you would like to speak and are connected via phone, select the raise hand icon below the panelist list and we will unmute your phone line.
- If you do not have the chance to speak, submit questions and comments via the **Q&A** panel for later follow-up.



Leadership Connection



Lauren M. Aleksunes
Scientific Program Committee



**Leigh Ann Burns
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2017-2018 Chair
Scientific Program Committee



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Overview

- Annual Meeting Sessions
 - Solicitation of Proposals
 - Preparation of Proposals by Organizers (SS/SIG internal review, comment, submission, etc.)
 - Proposal Review (Scientific Program and Continuing Education Committees)
 - Best Practices Related to Accepted Proposals
 - Continuing Education
 - Preparation of Proposals (internal practices)



Annual Meeting Scientific Sessions

- Cutting-Edge Interdisciplinary Science and New Perspectives
- Depth of Analysis
- Emerging Fields and Their Application to the Field of Toxicology
- Active Involvement in Other Areas of Toxicology



Annual Meeting Session Types

Annual Meeting Session Type	Description	# of Speakers	Details
S Symposia (165 minutes)	cutting-edge science: new areas, concepts, or data in the forefront of toxicology.	4-5 speakers	up to three nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
W Workshop (165 minutes)	informal, interactive presentations that highlight state-of-the-art knowledge in toxicology with an emphasis on discussion (panel discussion must be included)	4-5 speakers	up to three nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
R Roundtable (80 minutes)	controversial subjects; moderated discussions, with 3–4 speakers providing a three to five minute statement and the balance of the time for questions and discussion	3-4 speakers	up to two nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
HH Historical Highlights (usually 80 minutes)	review of a historical topic with toxicology impact	3-4 speakers	up to two nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support



Annual Meeting Session Types

	Annual Meeting Session Type	Description	# of Speakers	Funding Support Available
IS	Informational Session (usually 80 minutes)	general information and planned scientific activities not based on outcome of scientific research	3-4 speakers	up to two nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
EC	Education/Career Development (80 minutes)	tools and resources for toxicologists that will enhance their professional or scientific development	3-4 speakers	up to two nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
RI	Regional Interest (165 minutes)	central topics of relevance that describe public health and/or ecological problems of that region	3-4 speakers	up to three nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
PL	Platform (165 minutes)	oral presentations that cover new areas, concepts, or data	Not more than 9 presentations in one platform session	Not applicable
PS	Poster (180 minutes)	topic specific presentations that cover new areas, concepts, or data	Not more than 40 abstracts will be programmed	Not applicable



Competitive Nature of Proposals (Statistics)

AM Year	No. Submitted	No. Accepted	Acceptance %
2011	200	69	35
2012	168	69	41
2013	144	60	42
2014	146	62	42
2015	145	59	41
2016	130	57	44
2017	135	58	43

Space is limited for sessions thus, proposals are very competitive.

The number of proposals that can be accepted/sessioned each year is directly dependent on the location of the Annual Meeting and the rooms and their sizes that have been contracted. Contracts may be set up to 5 years in advance.



Full SOT Proposal Information

Can be found on this page:

www.toxicology.org/proposal



A Good Proposal has

- Clearly Presented Focus/Message
- Session objectives stated clearly
- **All speakers should be confirmed**
- Integrated Overall Abstract
 - Speaker abstracts that either build upon each other, contrast respective views, or otherwise contribute to the overall theme of the proposal.
- Endorsement by a SS/SIG/Committee (i.e., Endorser) with favorable ranking and/or insightful comments.
 - Endorsement by more than one SS/SIG/Committee is encouraged to facilitate interactions between component groups.



Proposal Quality

- Make sure the proposal is fully developed.
 - Proposals submitted with general topics for speakers, no proposed speakers, no description of what each speaker will cover, and/or 1-3 general sentences about the topic for the proposal (or speaker) generally do not fare well.
- The proposal should stand out to each SPC member so that he or she can determine the significance of the topic, the relationship of each talk to the topic and the inter-relationship of the talks to one another.
 - SPC members are selected with an effort to have a broad expertise across toxicology specialties and to be equally representative of job sectors and gender.
 - Proposals are independently reviewed and scored by SPC members without knowing how the other members are scoring.



Breadth of Topic and Speakers

- Make sure topic is relevant to toxicology.
- The SPC is sensitive to meeting the needs of the component groups, but tries to balance the scope of the proposal with the potential audience.
- Avoid topics that are too broad which may seem like a survey of the literature.
- Avoid having too many speakers from the same institution, job sector, etc. This helps provide diversity in perspective.



Member vs. Nonmember Speakers

- **Speaker Funding:**

- SOT will fully fund (travel and meeting registration) up to three nonmembers in a Symposium or Workshop session, or up to two for an accepted 80-minute session.
- SOT has many members; membership has broad expertise and we should utilize it.

- **Utilize nonmember speakers if they are the best presenters for a specific talk.**

- **Exceptions:**

- Topic is very novel.
- SPC is trying to increase exposure to scientific not normally at the Annual Meeting, but that impact toxicology.
- Apply for IAT (Innovations in Applied Toxicology) or ITS (Innovations in Toxicological Sciences) designation, which can allow for >2 nonmember speakers to receive full-funding.



Nonmember Speaker Funding

- Funding needs must be identified with submission.
- SOT Members are NOT eligible for funding support, including Annual Meeting registration.
- Two levels—all nonmember speakers will receive complimentary registration to attend the meeting.
 - **Full-Funding**—registration, lodging (up to two nights), travel (lowest economy), two days reimbursable expenses (meals up to \$50 per day, ground transportation, etc).
 - Full-Funding requests apply to both North American (U.S., Canada, Mexico) speakers and overseas speakers.
 - **Registration Only**—nonmember speakers who receive registration only support are not eligible for reimbursement at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. This type of funding is typically requested if three speakers (for a Symposium or Workshop), or two speakers (other session types), are already marked for full funding in the proposal, or if the nonmember speaker cannot accept full funding (e.g. speakers from Government agencies).



Endorsement

- There must be at least one primary endorser. Proposal submitters may indicate up to two additional endorsers.
- Sessions that cut across several topics: Consider selecting the Specialty Section Collaboration Group as an Endorser.
- The endorser ranks proposals against other proposals of the same session type (Symposia, Workshops, etc.).
- The endorser provides **comments** on the relative importance of the proposal to toxicology.
 - Absolutely used by SPC!
 - May be favorable, neutral, or critical (sometimes with recommendations)
- The endorsing groups are given 10 days to review, rank, and comment on proposals requesting endorsement.



Soliciting Endorser Input

- Assess potential interest early (now!)
 - Provide endorsers with proposal and rationale as to why the proposal will be of interest.
 - Request feedback as to their level of interest; they will be ranking the proposal relative to other like proposals.
- All groups have different processes for reviewing and ranking proposals so don't expect each one to act the same way.
 - Many desire the ability for early review and the opportunity to provide feedback.



New Proposal Deadline: May 15

- SPC expects close-to-final proposals
- More complete abstracts
 - Overall abstract
 - Individual presenter abstracts
- All speakers should be confirmed
- Close-to-final proposals means less modifying during the summer.



Endorser Review Process/Timeline

- **Monday, May 15, 2017, 11:59 PM US Eastern time:** Proposal submission deadline. Effective with the 2018 Annual Meeting: The deadline has been extended from the previous deadline of April 30.
- **May 16 to May 26:** Endorsers (SSs, SIGs, SOT Committees and Task Forces) complete review of proposals online—entry of ranks and comments.
 - PDFs of the proposals requesting endorsement from that endorser and a list of all proposals will be sent to the groups' Presidential Chain/Committee Chairperson.
 - A form created in SurveyMonkey will be sent to the endorsing group Presidential Chain/Committee Chairperson, although one person from the endorsing group review committee should be designated to enter the formal details online.
 - SOT HQ will send complete instructions and guidelines on how to use the SurveyMonkey review form.
 - All questions on the review form are required. The form may be edited until it has been submitted.
 - If you **do not endorse** a proposal that has identified your group as an endorser, please write “we do not endorse this proposal” in the final comment box on the review form. **Do not leave the comment box blank. *The SPC values endorsing group comments on the merits of the proposal both in quality as well as the value to the endorsing group***



NEW!

Specialty Section Confirmed Sessions

- Specialty Sections will be able to select a single proposal which will be presented at the Annual Meeting
 - Process the same as prior years (including SPC review and potential requests for modification)
 - Proposal will be reviewed outside the routine ranking system and sessioned
- Three-year rotation schedule (9 per year)



NEW!

Rotation Schedule for Confirmed Sessions

2018	2019	2020
Regulatory & Safety Eval.	Risk Assessment	<i>In Vitro</i> & Alternative Methods
Repro & Developmental Tox.	Drug Discovery Toxicology	Immunotoxicology
Mechanisms	Neurotoxicology	Inhalation & Respiratory
Nanotoxicology	Occupational & Public Health	Molecular & Systems Biology
Food Safety	Carcinogenesis	Metals
Biotechnology	Biological Modeling	Cardiovascular Toxicology
Dermal Toxicology	Medical Device	Tox. & Exploratory Pathology
Clinical & Translational Tox.	Mixtures	Stem Cells
Ocular Toxicology	Comparative & Veterinary	Ethical, Legal, & Social Issues



Where to Go Online for Information

- www.toxicology.org/proposal
- Proposal submission guidelines and detailed instructions for the online SS/SIG/Committee proposal review.
 - Description of all session types.
 - FAQs
 - Information about abstract submission for poster and platform presentations.
 - The link to this webinar recording and the slides.
 - Sample symposium and workshop proposals



Questions

Send your questions or comments using the [Q&A](#) panel.

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If you do not have the chance to speak, submit questions and comments for later follow-up.



How Does the Scientific Program Committee WORK?



2018 Proposal Review Timeline

- **Early March (no later than March 7): SOT Session Proposal Site opens**
- **Monday, May 15, 2017, 11:59 PM US Eastern time:** Proposal submission deadline.
- **May 16–May 26:** Endorsers complete review of proposals online—entry of ranks and comments.
- **Late May to mid June:** SPC review of proposals and endorser ranks/scores/comments.
- **Late June:** SPC face to face meeting to discuss review decisions, scores, ranks, comments, and tentatively accept, or not accept, all proposals.
- **By June 30:** SOT HQ, on behalf of SPC, communicates formal “tentative acceptance” or “non acceptance” to proposal submitters. Letters sent to session organizer with endorsing group President/Chairperson copied. Latter must communicate details with full review group.
- **By July 15:** Accepted session organizers must comply with requests from SOT HQ—full contact information for ALL nonmember speakers, any title or content changes, etc.
- **July 1–August 12:** Chairs for tentatively accepted sessions asked to revisit the abstract system to finalize overall abstract, as suggested by the SPC liaison for the session. Changes may include title changes; abstract updating; speaker roster changes.
- **Mid September:** Scientific Program Committee reconvenes to review the modified Invited Speaker proposals for the tentatively accepted sessions.
- **Late September:** Final Acceptance (or non acceptance) notices sent from SOT HQ.



SPC–The Deliberation

- Proposals, and Endorser ranks and comments, compiled by SOT HQ and sent to SPC and CE Committee within one week of Endorser review close.
- Committee members review the Annual Meeting proposal submissions
 - Provide a score: 1 (highest) through 5 (lowest).
 - Scores sent to SOT HQ and a mean for each proposal is calculated.
 - Turnaround time is approximately 2 weeks (like SS/SIG).



SPC-The Review Process

- **2-day Face-to-Face meeting in June:**
 - Worksheet provided with historical data and number of rooms available, as well as proposals listed based on mean score, divided into thirds.
 - Top third: most likely to be accepted; bottom third: most likely to be rejected; middle third: “on the bubble”
 - Discuss proposals:
 - More attention is focused on those on the bubble.
 - Competitive but duplicative proposals (decide).
 - Any on or below the bubble that an SPC member wants to champion for further consideration by the group.
 - Discussion often frank. “What’s said at SPC, stays at SPC.”
 - SPC members recuse themselves during deliberations if a proposal list them as an organizer, speaker, or input solicited as SS/SIG officer.



SPC-The Review Process (cont.)

- Provide reasons for rejection for all proposals not tentatively accepted
- Provide any required input from SPC for tentatively-accepted proposals
 - Suggestions for broadening speaker sector, inclusion of specific perspective, fewer speakers from same institution, etc.
 - Assign SPC liaisons to all “tentatively accepted” proposals.
 - NOTE: Refusal to consider or adjust proposals based on SPC input may result in the proposal not receiving final acceptance in September. (This is why they are “**Tentatively Accepted**” when communicated in late June.)
Work with your liaison!



Reasons for Proposal Rejection

- **Membership**

- The proposal guidelines require that at least one chairperson be a member of the SOT.
- Full-funding support is limited to no more than three nonmember speakers.



Reasons for Proposal Rejection

- **Endorsement (Ranking/Comments)**
 - Endorser comments were not considered supportive enough to merit acceptance.
 - Lack of enthusiasm, as evidenced by comments and relative ranking.



Reasons for Proposal Rejection

- **Quality of the proposal**
 - The focus of the subject material was considered to be too narrow.
 - The extent of the coverage of the topic area needs to be improved.
 - The focus on methodology needs to be expanded.
 - The proposal was not fully developed. Additional information concerning the nature of the individual presentations is required.
 - The proposal addresses a topic that does not adequately focus on the toxicological sciences.



Reasons for Proposal Rejection

- **Other Issues**

- The SPC felt that this was a good proposal, but that the topic was too similar to one held at a recent SOT Annual Meeting.
- The SPC felt that this was a good proposal, but was unable to include it in this year's program due to the significant number of good proposals and space limitations.
- **Generally the SPC encourages resubmission, but this does not guarantee acceptance the following year.**



The Review for Final Acceptance

- SPC members review individual abstracts against objectives stated in the overview for “tentatively accepted” proposals for which they were assigned as liaison.
 - Only the assigned committee member reviews the overview and individual abstracts for the tentatively accepted session.
- SPC members participate in a teleconference in September to confirm “Final Acceptance” of sessions, any rejections, voluntary withdrawals/replacements.
- Face-to-Face meeting in early November to finalize sessioning with the inclusion of Poster and Platform sessions.
 - Significant effort made to eliminate/minimize overlap.
- Possible presenter conflicts are evaluated and rectified, and the *Final Program* is completed in December.



Poster and Platform Abstracts

- SPC strongly encourages submitters to select the appropriate presentation type when submitting abstracts during the final submission phase.
 - Poster Only – presenter will only be considered for a poster session.
 - Platform or Poster – presenter will be considered for both presentation types. By selecting this presentation type, the Scientific Program Committee is able to develop dynamic platform sessions.
- ❖ *Coming in 2018: Full day poster viewing. Stay tuned for additional information.*



Reasons for Abstract Rejection

- The abstract reports no new data, knowledge, interpretations or applications.
 - The abstract may describe a proposal or work in progress, with no results to report at this time. This abstract may be resubmitted for a future meeting once results become available.
- The abstract is poorly written.
- The abstract presents a review of published literature and does not report new scientific interpretations or applications.
- The abstract fails to indicate the substance investigated in the study.
- The abstract promotes a commercial product of potential interest to scientific community. The Scientific Program Committee believes that presentation of this information would be more appropriate at the Exhibitor's booth.



Reasons for Abstract Rejection

- The abstract is one of several emanating from a single study and cannot form a separate presentation.
- The abstract raises ethical questions that need to be resolved or clarified before it can be accepted.
- The experimental design and/or interpretations are flawed or biased.
- The work as presented is fundamentally sound but it is unclear in its connection and relevance to toxicology.



2018 Annual Meeting Reference Links

- 2018 Annual Meeting Session Proposal Site Link can be found here:

www.toxicology.org/proposal

- All proposals must be received by May 15, 2017.
- Be sure to review the section “FAQs: Session Programming and Scheduling (“Why is that session then?”), for more insight on how SPC puts together the Scientific Program each year.



Questions

Send your questions or comments using the [Q&A](#) panel.

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Thank You for Attending!

- The recording of this session will be posted on the SOT website.
- Contact SOT HQ with any questions.