

Committee on Meetings Annual Report 2003

APS Committee on Meetings Meeting
Summary Minutes for July 25, 2003 College Park, MD

Committee Members Present:	Staff Members Present
Melvyn J. Shochet (Chair)	Donna Baudrau
David Tanner (Past Chair)	Terri Gaier
Judy Franz	Daren Dean
Stuart Freedman	Don Wise
Mark Lee	Vinaya Sathyasheelappa
Thomas McIlrath	(Vinaya was present for only a portion of the meeting.)
John Wilkins	
Christopher Monroe	

At 9:00am the meeting was called to order by the chair, followed by welcome and introductions. Donna led the group through a review of the March 2003 history, beginning with a statistical review of the breakdown of attendance according to student, member/non-member and breakdown by unit membership. March 2003 was the largest meeting to date, which included the highest student attendance. The committee speculated as to the cause of the increased attendance and it was suggested that perhaps this might be attributed to the badge-checking policy. Possibly there wasn't an actual increase in attendance, but those who have come to the meeting in the past without registering are now being forced to register due to the badge-checking. This led to a discussion regarding the importance of checking membership status at the time of abstract submission. Approximately 50% of abstracts come in on the last day and a member identification number or writing "membership pending" will allow one to make a submission. The consensus was that it is acceptable for a non-member to submit an abstract given that the submitter becomes a member by the day of the sorters meeting.

Donna reviewed tables that illustrated the number of new members who join at APS March and April Meetings, the ratio of contributed/invited abstracts, March attendance by state/county, history of registration fees and invited/focused/contributed sessions by unit. Also, it was pointed out that there has been no change in membership fees over the last year.

Donna then discussed the new exhibit management module; AIP will cease managing the

exhibits beginning with the March 2005 meeting. APS intends to bring sales and management of the exhibits in-house which will save the Society \$40,000-\$50,000. Donna stated that \$270,000 gross was made from the March Meeting and \$110,000 was made from the exhibits.

There was a brief discussion about exhibition hours: 10-5 (Monday), 10-5 (Tuesday), 10-4 (Wednesday) and it was stated that we have the poster session, an e-mail pavilion and attendee lounge in the exhibit hall to increase traffic through the exhibits.

Donna stated that the meager use of the childcare service and the significant expense incurred to host it, has caused the APS cease offering this service. It costs \$7,000 whether we have one child or many. It was mentioned that major hotels usually provide a referral list of babysitting services that could be used by attendees who bring children.

There was then a review of the March Meeting financial statement. Donna pointed out that the actual net revenue on the Financial Statement hand-out does not include APS revenue?with APS revenue, the figure is \$593,000. Furthermore, the projected expense for adding LCD projectors to all sessions was an additional \$50,000, on top of the usual A-V expense of \$80,000=total projected A-V expense of \$130,000. The actual expense was \$139,681. Mark Lee stated that many of the session chairs are leery of using laptops for giving presentations so they opt for using overheads. This is probably due to the misconception that it still takes a great deal of time to set up a laptop.

The April Meeting was then discussed beginning with the issue of attendance. In addition to the overall increase in attendance, there was a significant increase in student attendance. This increase may partially be attributed to the fact that DPF sends a large number of students to the meeting and provides financial support. Donna pointed out that meetings make a substantial contribution to obtaining new members. Judy clarified a question regarding the discrepancy between the number of attendees and submitted papers. Judy attributes this discrepancy to the fact that the April Meeting is not the primary professional meeting for these attendees and also to the fact that the senior people often don't give talks but do attend. Furthermore, most attendees are members of very large groups so not everyone is able to speak.

The breakdown of attendance was reviewed with these highlights: DPF attendance increased, DPP is trying to make a greater effort to participate in the April Meeting, we may get the Sherwood Conference to come and DAMOP attendance is down because DAMOP is concentrating on greater participation in the March Meeting.

There was then a review of the DPF participation in the April Meeting. Their stand-alone meeting is usually held on university campuses, so their accommodations are much less expensive, and they get outside funding to support the meeting. However, the attendance of DPF members at the meeting was much increased than previous April Meetings.

The April Meeting financial statement was then reviewed. The net cost to APS was \$45,746. The question was raised as to whether or not we should continue holding the April Meeting. It was concluded that the April Meeting should remain because incrementally it brings in money (actual

net revenue of \$107,000 per Tom McIlrath).

Judy stated that we are constantly looking to have other groups join the April Meeting, for example, Sherwood meeting, HEAD (AAS).

Other business was then discussed. APS will be providing meeting planning and technical services for the ICPS2004 meeting in Flagstaff, AZ, and providing registration services for the 2004 DAMOP meeting. This will bring in an additional \$64,500 in revenue to the organization.

Judy presented an Executive Board Resolution, which passed June 19, 2003:

MOTION: *That the Executive Board approves the allocation of at least one plenary session at the March and April meetings for interdisciplinary and unity of physics talks.*

ACTION: *Passed with one abstention*

Tracy Alinger then gave a presentation regarding the new abstract submission system. The following is an outline of the aforementioned:

1995: E-mail based submission

1997: Web submission

1998: Add schedule planner shopping cart to get personal schedule

2002: Dropped e-mail submissions

- LaTeX format submissions only
- Flat file, non-relational data system
- Reporting and limiting cumbersome
- Highly proprietary; requires tedious administration and training
- Just information, not a true database

New System Overview

Phase I

MS Word & LaTeX submissions (web only)

In place for March 2004 submissions

Phase II

Processing system completely rewritten in relational database format

In place for April 2004 submissions

Benefits & Opportunities

Common database format facilitates easier administration & training

Reporting much more flexible & easily customized

Personal scheduler improvements

Web program: .gif display replaced with .pdf

Program export to PDA
Targeted distribution for remote sorting
Nightly refresh of web program
Submitter status check via personal login
On-line editing via personal login (up to program freeze date)

Comments & Questions

What would you like added to this? What's of the highest priority?

It would be nice if the print menu would allow for a font change.
Day by day printing would be helpful.
Being able to print smaller sessions as opposed to the entire program would be an asset.
A sort by sorting category capability would be great.
Should create hyperlinks to abstracts in the future.
We should be able to find poster vs. oral abstracts because it would be easier to arrange the poster sessions with this information (the new system will have this capability).

This led to a discussion regarding the fact that abstracts from invited speakers are often not received by the meeting date. It was suggested that we produce a report telling us who we haven't yet received abstracts from. We could then give this information to the program chairs so that they could try to get the abstracts from the tardy participants. We currently do provide this information at the sorters meeting and still often don't receive the invited speakers' abstracts in a timely manner. It was then stated that there is no way to force the invited speakers to submit their abstracts on time; we have to just keep reminding them. The freeze date for receiving abstracts is in January. It was suggested that we add the following message to the invited speaker letter in order to encourage timely submission of abstracts: "Experience has shown that talks without abstracts are poorly attended."

Someone then inquired about how a person is able to submit an abstract without a member I.D. Currently people can simply put in "membership pending" and are able to submit an abstract; however, this is not followed up on as it involves too much tracking and we don't have the resources for this. The system should be equipped with the capability to stop the abstract in the event that the submitter fails to join as a member. John Wilkins commented that there is still an inherent problem with checking membership with the current system because people can be listed by different names (i.e., John Wilkins, J. Wilkins, etc.).

Judy then led a discussion regarding VISA issues by reviewing the web site
<http://www.aps.org/meet/MAR04/visa/index.cfm>

DOE people need to fill out a form requesting foreign travel; the DOE claims that the form will clear in a month. Also, everyone (except those from "terrorist" countries) should be able to use automatic VISA revalidation. Those in the process of changing VISA status are at great risk for reentry refusal. Judy will look into what assistance the Canadian Physics societies can provide for those that are denied reentry into the United States. Maybe we could put help numbers on the web for those driving who are denied reentry into the United States.

Suggested changes for VISA web site:

The VISA web site currently says, "2003" but should be changed to "2004."

<http://www.aps.org/meet/MAR04/visa/6.cfm> If you run into any difficulty for the 2003 March meeting

Anywhere on the VISA web site <http://www.aps.org/meet/MAR04/visa/index.cfm> where it speaks of non-US citizens, it should say, "?citizen of or born in ?" (i.e., on warnings page <http://www.aps.org/meet/MAR04/visa/5.cfm> , "If you are a citizen of or born in a country for which the U.S. requires additional clearance..."

Add "Iraq" to <http://www.aps.org/meet/MAR04/visa/2c.cfm> under "WARNING" at the bottom of the page.

Form I-94 "The small card that you received when you entered the country." There shouldn't be a space in the word, "when."

Add VISA requirements reminder to all of the e-mails, which state receipt of March registration.

Donna then led a discussion regarding the factors that affect hotel room rates and site selection for APS meetings. Donna conducts extensive site-exploration determining cities that have appeal, availability, the appropriate facilities and reasonable rates. There are many factors that affect rates, including time of year (peak or non-peak season), days of the week, food and beverage revenue to the hotel, etc. The decision making process is sometimes difficult the APS membership consists of a very diverse community with differing abilities to afford the rates. Donna must make certain that the rates are within reason. Our members like to go to first-tier cities, but don't want to pay the rates of first-tier cities. Also, we must keep the price range reasonable so that students can afford to attend.

Finally, a complaint letter was discussed, submitted to the Committee by the Chair. Someone from Rochester complained of minority bias and antifeminism. A female was invited to speak at the March Meeting, but then was given an award for which she would have given the same talk. No one is permitted to give two talks at the same meeting. The question is whether or not there should be an exemption to this rule when a speaker already invited to speak is then given a prize. The final decision was that we aren't changing the policy but will consider exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.