

Committee on Meetings Annual Report October 30, 2002

The Committee on Meetings had one meeting, August 5, 2002, in College Park. Present were

Committee members	Staff members
Sam Bader	Donna Baudrau
Kate Kirby	Terri Gaier
Stuart Freedman	Karen MacFarland
Melvyn Shochet	Vinaya Sathyasheelappa
David Tanner	Don Wise
John Wilkins	Reached by phone: Tom McIlrath Judy Franz

The committee reviewed the 2002 March and April Meetings, discussed plans and issues for the 2003 meetings, and discussed visa issues for the 2004 March Meeting, which is to be held in Montreal.

March 2002 Meeting.

Registration numbers for March 2002 appear to be the highest ever. The committee attributes this in part to a vigorous badge-checking policy and strongly supports continued badge checking. In addition, there are a number who join at APS March (and April) Meetings. The meetings deserve some credit in the attracting new members.

There was a brief discussion about March Meeting posters. The consensus was that the poster presentations important to some units and that some individuals prefer to present posters. The posters draw an audience into the exhibit hall as well, and the exhibitors are pleased.

The meeting has a number of what might be called auxiliary activities or support functions. The Lunch with the Experts is popular with students and with the experts and is expected to continue. APS will discontinue the Run for Health, as it only attracted 15 runners, making it a very costly activity. APS will provide child care for the March 2003 Meeting, but the committee discussed whether the high cost was sustainable in future years. The program, instituted on a trial basis in 2000, attracts only a few children. The committee will review this issue next year and make comparison with other scientific groups.

April 2002 Meeting.

In reviewing the Meeting history, the committee agreed that it would be profitable to hold joint meetings with other associations every few years. Badge-checking at the April Meeting was discussed, but it was decided that it might not be necessary in view of the smaller attendance at that meeting. In a discussion of costs and budgets, the committee learned that the March meeting makes money after overhead allocations, whereas the April meeting is consistently in the red. Nevertheless, the Society will continue to organize the April meeting and will look for ways to reduce expenses and increase revenue.

The Committee next reviewed issues associated with the 2003 March and April Meetings.

Abstract submission system for 2003

The new abstract submission system was presented to the Committee. Abstracts will be submitted electronically, in either MS-Word or LaTeX. The system will allow individuals to preview their abstracts for correct formatting, although the high volume of abstracts on deadline day may require that this feature be turned off. APS will include language to this effect in the on-line abstract submission instructions. In addition, the system will permit abstracts to be sent automatically via email to, for example, focus topic organizers. The committee thought that this is good for pre-planning but will not supplant attendance at the Sorters Meeting.

The committee discussed whether the submission system should be tied to the membership database, so as to enforce the rule that only APS members may submit abstracts. Because many exceptions to this rule exist (reciprocal society agreements, exemption of invited speakers and prize winners) and because of server saturation on deadline day, the committee agreed that the policy allowing only APS members to submit abstracts is a good policy, but that enforcement during the submission process is not presently practical.

Other abstract-related issues

The committee discussed the overlapping problems of persons who submit abstracts but do not register and of persons who submit abstracts, but do not appear for their talks. The submission system will ask for the first author's email address, which can be compared to the list of registrants. The committee suggested that APS conduct a session-chair survey to see if all authors appeared on time, and/or how many people did appear at all.

Invited sessions issues

The committee heard a discussion of the allocation invited sessions at the March and April Meetings. No changes from the present system were proposed. The committee considered a request by the APS Forums for a designated time slot at the April Meeting, reserved for Forum sessions alone. The motivation is to increase attendance at these sessions, by eliminating competition with technical sessions. The committee view is that the Forums must design compelling sessions to draw attendance; it was not in favor of allowing a special time slot for Forum sessions.

Registration fees for 2003

The committee discussed raising registration fees to cover the increased cost of A-V. The proposed increase was \$25 for members and \$50 for nonmembers. The committee agreed on a schedule of fees for the March and April 2003 Meetings incorporating these increases.

New A-V capabilities for 2003

The committee discussed the feasibility of providing LCD video projectors in every meeting room at the March and April Meetings. There was some concern that speakers with contributed talks might lose valuable time setting up their presentations, but hardware solutions (a switcher at the head table allowing multiple laptops, A-V Help tables near the meeting rooms, and an A-V Get-Ready Room) should minimize problems. The committee agreed that LCD projectors should be provided in all meeting rooms at both the March and April Meetings.

In correspondence to speakers, APS will remind them to bring transparencies in the event that the LCD presentation does not work. APS will also provide instructions to session chairs that a 12-minute talk cannot be extended if there are technical difficulties associated with laptop/LCD connections.

Visa issues for March 2004 meeting

The committee had a broad discussion of potential visa problems at the 2004 March Meeting, which will be held in Montreal. One committee member (Wilkins) has drafted a web page which will be useful in providing information to non-U.S. citizens who wish to attend the meeting. The committee heard a briefing by Irving Lerch, Director of International Affairs, which provided the following information. An individual with a visa that is in order ought not to have difficulties. Every foreign attendee should apply for his or her visa for Canada early and must ensure that his or her US visa is in order and that it allows multiple entries to the United States. APS will provide information on Visa applications but will not intercede with consulates.

Lerch plans to visit the Canadian embassy to discuss ways to help our attendees avoid pitfalls. He will draft a message, which will be sent by email and posted to the 2004 meeting announcement, and which will include these types of questions to foreign nationals:

1. Is your J1 or H1B Visa valid through the dates of the March Meeting?
2. Do you have multiple re-entry?
3. Have you applied for a Canadian Visa? (Do this 3 months prior to the meeting!)

Volunteers from the Committee on International Freedom of Scientists may sit at an information desk at the March Meeting in Austin.

There is a distinct chance that there will be new U.S. Government regulations and procedures before the March 2004 Meeting. If a crisis occurs weeks before the meeting, even U.S. citizens should be prepared with a valid passport and/or birth certificate.

Respectfully submitted,
David B. Tanner