

ACS Division of Fuel Chemistry Guidelines for Symposium Organizers

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What is a Symposium? SYMPOSIUM (sim-POH-zee-uhm) – (n.) A meeting or conference to discuss one or more topic, especially one in which the participants make presentations to the other participants. Although today we think of a symposium as a formal meeting or conference, such gatherings were much more fun in antiquity. In Latin, *symposium* means a drinking party. It derives from Greek $\sigma\upsilon\mu\upsilon\sigma\iota\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$, which literally means "a drinking-with." Thus, symposium is related to such words as *potion* and *potable*.

How Do I Get Involved? If you think you have an idea for a good symposium, if you wish to help with its organization, do not wait to be discovered – contact the Program Chair or Program Secretary. You can find their names and contact information at the Division web site (<http://www.anl.gov/PCS/acsfuel>). If the Program Chair likes your symposium topic, and feels convinced that there is a good chance for a successful symposium, you get nominated as a symposium chair. Bear in mind that it is not a prerequisite to have 30 or 40 years of experience in your field, or to be a world-recognized expert in that area. In fact, there are usually a lot of young, energetic individuals among symposium organizers, and enthusiasm certainly carries at least as much weight as experience.

The First Steps – The first thing to do after your nomination is to identify 1–3 co-organizers representing different institutions. This should be done in close collaboration with the Program Chair. In general, the more co-organizers the merrier, not only because of sharing the responsibilities, but also to ensure your symposium will actually happen even if unexpected events prevent you from attending the meeting. Once you have a team, make sure you establish good communication and a work plan (milestones, etc.). We have seen cases where everyone thought the other co-organizers were working on the symposium, but no work was being done.

The next step is for the organizers to define the scope. Make a list of specific technical topics that you want to include in the symposium. In some cases, it is useful to divide these topics into several categories, which may later serve as a basis for the division of papers into sessions. For example, a symposium entitled Advances in Hydrogen Energy may be divided into the following subtopics: Power and Transportation Applications, Reforming, Production, Storage, and Purification and Monitoring. You may choose to make different symposium co-organizers responsible for different subtopics. Do not feel compelled to subdivide at any cost; in many cases a single, well-defined topic is just fine.

The third step is the preparation of a symposium call for papers (flyer), and an example of such a document is enclosed. Be brief and specific. Include the following information: symposium title, scope (in the form of bullets), names, addresses, and contact information of symposium organizers, submission deadlines, and web addresses where directions for abstract and preprint preparation can be found.

The importance of the symposium flyer cannot be understated. Once the document is prepared, and the sooner it happens the better, you should never leave home without it. Always remember that your primary objective as a symposium organizer is to attract the best technical papers possible. This always requires an advertising effort and, admittedly, not everyone enjoys that. It is easier than it seems, however, and a well-designed symposium flyer is your best friend. Take it with you on business trips, to conferences, seminars, workshops, and meetings. Display stacks of leaflets at conference tables, post announcements on bulletin boards, pdf the flyer and e-mail it to your colleagues and associates, asking them to circulate this material further. E-mail is, in fact, the most effective and painless way of letting people know about your symposium. Compile a distribution list of scientists involved in research on your topic and send them an invitation with your flyer as an attachment. A few months later you may e-mail them a reminder, but be tactful and generate no junk mail.

The old-fashioned telephone and personal contacts can also be extremely effective, albeit time consuming, especially if you wish to invite keynote speakers. It is not absolutely necessary to have keynote lectures in your program, but keynote speakers usually help attract more submissions, participants, and they also raise the perceived rank of your symposium.

When you complete the above-described activities, after the flyer have been sent out and keynote speakers agreed to participate, you are more than half way through with your work.

Technicalities – Here comes the good news: you will never lick stamps, handle paper, or need a secretary. ACS is said to be the largest professional organization in the world, and you will come to benefit from that. There are hundreds of ACS employees working to make the organization of your symposium a smooth process, and the power of the Internet certainly helps. All abstract and preprint submissions, correspondence between authors and organizers, review and acceptance of papers, dividing the papers into sessions, scheduling, all this is performed through the so-called On-Line Abstract Submittal System (OASys). As a result, less than 10% of your time will be spent on administrative tasks. Specific instructions on how to use OASys vary from year to year slightly, but the system is usually intuitive and user friendly. More specific directions will be provided by the Program Chair.

Preprints – The ACS requires abstracts to be submitted for each presentation, but the ACS Division of Fuel Chemistry has additionally a "no preprint, no podium" policy. This means that all papers to be presented before the Division have to be included in a volume (currently a CD) of preprints. Preprints must be submitted in advance, they have to comply with a specific format, and preprint templates can be downloaded from the Division web site to facilitate manuscript preparation. It should be stressed that the preprint requirement is a firm policy, and no exceptions are ever made, even in the case of keynote speakers. The preferred length of submitted papers is two pages, but shorter and longer manuscripts are not uncommon.

Peer-Reviewed Publications – Although preprints are not refereed publications, they have been highly regarded within the research community. Many libraries carry subscriptions to the ACS Division of Fuel Chemistry Preprints, and expanded versions of symposium papers are often published as books or special issues of journals. If you wish to consider such post-symposium publications, contact publishers or journal editors, preferably a few months before the symposium. The ACS has a publications department that operates under special arrangement with Oxford University Press. Information for prospective authors can be found at <http://pubs.acs.org/books/authorinfo.shtml>.

Author Certification – The ACS has a requirement that at least one of the authors of a paper presented at a national meeting should be a member of the ACS. In practice, this is not a major impediment for contributors who are not ACS members. All you need to do is to make a statement indicating that these

papers are important to the success of your symposium. Such a statement is made on-line through OASys.

Number of Papers – The number of submissions depends on the symposium topic, the efforts of the symposium organizers, and the location of the meeting, not necessarily in that order. In general, the more the better, but you should bear in mind that you are responsible for the quality of the papers you accept. Submissions that do not meet your standards should be rejected or returned to authors for revisions. The minimum number of papers for a symposium is probably 6-7 so that a single session can be scheduled. Symposia of as many as 50 papers are possible, and we have not seen anyone overburden the system with too many papers.

Oral Presentations – Only papers meant for oral presentations are accepted by the Division of Fuel Chemistry. The morning sessions begin at 8:30 a.m., and end at 12:00 p.m. for lunch. The program typically resumes at 1:30 p.m., and the afternoon sessions end at 5:00 p.m. While you may need to depart from this to accommodate a large number of papers, you put the speaker at a significant disadvantage if you schedule a talk when most people are eating breakfast, lunch or dinner. The typical talk is 25 minutes in length, including 5 minutes for questions. This leaves time for about 7 talks per session, with a 15 minute break after the third or fourth talk. You may want to allow more time (30–45 minutes) for an invited keynote lecture. It is our opinion that even the most compelling speaker should not be allowed to talk for more than 45 minutes. According to the ACS program guidelines, the inclusion of intermissions is discouraged if it will require the addition of more sessions. In practice, we have nearly always included breaks.

The Sci-Mix Poster Session – Sci-Mix is a popular interdivisional poster session usually held on the Monday night of a national meeting. It is a fun event where researchers go to meet, socialize, and exchange ideas. (Snacks and drinks are provided by the ACS.) Each division is represented by the most interesting contributions displayed in the form of posters. As a symposium organizer, you will be asked to make recommendations for the Sci-Mix session.

The Glenn Award – In 1956, the Division of Fuel Chemistry, in cooperation with Bituminous Coal Research, Inc., established an award to recognize outstanding papers presented at Division Symposia. In 1972, the award was named in honor of Richard A. Glenn, who served as Assistant Director of Research at Bituminous Coal Research, Inc. and as Chairman of the Fuel Chemistry Division in 1960. All papers presented at Fuel Chemistry Division symposia are eligible for this award. Symposium chairs review the papers in their sessions and select about one paper for every ten submitted that they feel are the most innovative and interesting. A selection committee then reads all of the papers and attends the presentations of those papers at the meeting. Based on the oral presentation, technical subject matter, and the quality of the preprint, the committee selects a paper to receive the R.A. Glenn Award.

Sources of Information – Helpful information can be found at the following web sites:
<http://www.anl.gov/PCS/acsfuel> and <http://oasys.acs.org>. If you have questions or concerns, the person to contact is the Program Chair.