



GENERAL ACTIVITIES OF PROGRAM COMMITTEE
71st Annual Alumni Seminar Day
May 17, 2008

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The major responsibility of the Program Committee is to obtain capable speakers with interesting subjects who are willing to speak at the Annual Alumni Seminar Day. The speakers are recruited from the six divisions of the Institute, the winners of the Doris S. Perpall SURF Speaking Awards, the Distinguished Graduate Student Lecture Series, and JPL. In addition, possible displays/exhibits or demonstrations are investigated with the Divisions.

A team of two Program Committee members is given the assignment of meeting with the Division Chair and potential speakers from each Division and reporting the results of their meetings with recommendations to the full Committee at the second meeting. The team approach is used so if only one member is available at a meeting, the Committee will have the benefit of a report.

Each committee member attends three full committee meetings held in, September, November, and April. These meetings are scheduled on Monday evenings at the Athenaeum, cocktails and social time are at 6:00 p.m., dinner and meeting 6:30 p.m.

PROGRAMMING

Those attending Seminar Day are alumni and guests, including a large portion of people without a technical or scientific background. The most successful talks are those of a general interest having a technical or current events subject, but presented without mathematical formulae or deep philosophical concepts.

Past Seminars have been programmed so that there are always at least one or two non-technical talks given each session. It is, however, important to recognize that the audience is well educated and resents being talked down to on any subject.

It is interesting that many of the talks rated as the "least enjoyable" in past years were characterized by being overly technical. Since it has been noted that these same talks were rated by others as being the "most enjoyable", if technical talks are given at Seminar Day, some mention of it should be made in the Program so no one is misled.

Almost more important than the content of the talk is the capability of the speaker. He/she should not only know the subject, but should know how to put it across to an essentially non-technical audience. He/she should be witty, friendly, and enthusiastic.

Speakers to avoid include those with heavy accents or who would read their papers. It has been the policy not to invite the same speaker to appear two years in succession, so that those speakers listed for last year are not considered except under very special circumstances.

PROCEDURE

Before meeting with any prospective speaker, each team meets with the respective Division Chair to obtain permission to meet with faculty within the Division and to obtain suggestions for potential speakers. This initial meeting has the important advantage of providing an overall view of the Division from the Chair's viewpoint. It is recommended that both team members be present at this conference and at the meetings with faculty members. In the discussions with each possible speaker, it is important to obtain an availability commitment.

The Alumni Office will make the appointments for the Division teams with both the Division Chair and the potential speakers. The staff will try to schedule consecutive appointments to minimize the time required.

It is important to remember that the Division Chair is a possible speaker.

EXHIBIT RESPONSIBILITIES

When meeting with the Division Chair, discuss possible exhibits that could be presented.

The team should be prepared at the second full Committee meeting to discuss various exhibits from each Division, and if possible, to recommend whether they should be included in the Seminar Day program.

II. INFORMATION TO BE OBTAINED IN A MEETING WITH A POSSIBLE SPEAKER

1. The speaker's exact name, formal academic title, Institute mailing address, and Institute extension. The Alumni Office will provide this information for you.
2. The team should write a brief (25-30 word) synopsis of the lecture. It should be enough to give the General Committee an idea of the degree of interest that the lecture will have to the alumni audience. Generally the synopsis is written by team members from notes taken during the discussion.
3. A tentative title for the lecture and, if possible, one or two alternate titles either for the same lecture or, if available, for alternate lectures by the same speaker.
4. Information as to whether the lecture has been given before, and if so, when and before what groups.

III. INFORMATION TO BE GIVEN IN A MEETING WITH A POSSIBLE SPEAKER

1. The Seminar Day Date: SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2008
2. Speaking Time: A 38-MINUTE TALK given twice during the day. This 38-minute figure allows, in addition, two minutes for the introduction of the speaker by Session Chair and five minutes for questions. The total time for the session is 45 minutes. It is important to stress this as the following sessions and the day's schedule are affected if anyone runs over. This has occurred in the past, and the point cannot be stressed too much.
3. (If the speaker makes an availability commitment.) In November, each speaker will be notified that he/she will need to submit an abstract of their talk.

IV. REPORT RESULTS

Each team should summarize the results of its meetings, with recommendations, and bring these to the second full Committee meeting. The written synopsis and suggested title must be in the Alumni Office several days before the meeting so they may be distributed to the full Committee prior to the meeting. The team must also be prepared to discuss the written synopsis and merits of the speakers selected.

V. SESSION CHAIRMAN PROCEDURE

1. The Alumni Office will obtain and send to each Session Chair biographical data on the speakers.
2. Prepare a two-minute (maximum) introduction.
3. Each speaker is being advised by letter as to:
 - a. Your serving as Session Chair
 - b. Length of lecture
 - c. Time and location of his/her lecture
 - d. It is well advised for you to call the speaker and review these items as well as obtain any additional information for the introduction.

VI. TIME CONTROL

Starting times are listed in the program. The allotted time of 45 minutes is divided as follows:

Call the session to order:	00
Introduction - two minutes:	02
Talk - 38 minutes:	40
Questions & Conclusions - 5 minutes:	45

SESSION

0 + 00 Typical Introduction

Dr. Smith is going to tell us today about a means for information storage that makes our tape recorders look primitive indeed. Dr. Smith was graduated from the University of Chicago and received his doctorate here at Caltech. He has specialized in research on heredity transmission. We hope to have time for a few questions at the end of Dr. Smith's talk. We must not continue past our adjournment time, however. We will expect to adjourn promptly at 45 minutes past the hour. I can now introduce Dr. John A. Smith, who will talk to you about "DNA - A Carrier of Heredity."

0 + 02
to Talk
0 + 40
0 + 40
to Questions and Conclusion
0 + 45

Thank you very much, Dr. Smith. We have about _____ minutes left before our adjournment time. Are there any questions?

0 + 43 or 0 + 44 (at the end of an answer to a question). We have only _____ (one or two) minutes left, which give us time for only one more question. Does anyone have a brief question before we adjourn? It is now time for us to adjourn, so that you will not be late for (use one of the three following that applies): (1) your next lecture, which begins in 15 minutes; (2) your lunch, which begins at 12:30 p.m. (applies to general session only) (3) the wine and cheese reception which begins at 5:15 p.m.

On behalf of the Alumni Association, we would like to thank you again for your excellent talk.

SIGNALS

Chair to speaker, to use when speaker exceeds his/her allotted time (not to be encouraged):

0 + 40 On time (thumb and fingers closed to form a circle)

0 + 41 One minute overtime (hold up one finger)

0 + 42 Two minutes overtime (hold two fingers)

0 + 43 Three minutes overtime (hold up three fingers)

0 + 44 Take your place on the platform. Interrupt speaker, if necessary.

"Dr. _____, I am afraid we must adjourn in one more minute, as we are approaching the end of our allotted time."

This is to be avoided if at all possible, for obvious reasons. It is important to stress the time schedule with the speaker prior to the beginning.)