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CHAIR Guidelines



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Guidelines for Chairing a session at OMICS Group Conferences

The following guidelines are for chairing sessions at the **OMICS Group Conferences.** Guidelines are provided to ensure a smooth running of the conference. An attentive, well-prepared Session Chair and Co-chair can help in ensuring a high quality performance by the speakers, trouble-free talks that would lead in appreciation of sessions by the audience.

In an unlikely event that one of the speakers cancels at the very last minute, you might have an available short talk/presentation of your own to help maintain the continuity of the session. Perhaps, a talk you've previously delivered at another venue, or one you would like to "take out for a spin" to gauge audience reactions, or a short movie clip showing something about your company or installation…… this could be very helpful to the program. The issue here is maintaining the published schedule. When a speaker drops out after the schedule is published, and attendees have made plans as to which talks to attend, a disruption caused by an empty slot can snowball across different tracks and disappoint people who really wanted to see your second speaker. So, rearranging the order of presenters should not be done lightly without consideration for that effects on attendees.

> "Recognize that you are the leader of the session. You are the one everyone will turn to if there are problems among your speakers or within your audience. Thank you for agreeing to assume high responsibility. Much of the success of the conference will rest on the efficient and consistent execution of our technical presentation sessions. As important as running the session well is the critical era. If you pick up on something that causes a stir or is particularly controversial, jot it down and make a point of informing someone from the Program Committee, or the Chairs as appropriate. Feedback is an essential aspect of this program"

Prior to Your Session

Meet with the support staff from the Local Arrangement Committee prior to your session to review the workings of the lights, the AV equipment, and good positions for your speakers in your session's room. It is a good idea to make sure a laser pointer is available.

Meet with all your speakers 15 minutes before the start of your session. At that time, make needed introductions and help them feel comfortable with the room arrangements and fellow participants. Discuss their positions at the podium and remind them of their time limitations. Have all your speakers tried out their laptops, viewgraphs, and the microphone to determine any required assistance and to ensure a reasonable comfort level.

Describe to your speakers the method you will use to notify them when they are nearing their presentation time limit and how you will interrupt them if they have reached the end of their allotted time. Try to leave time for pertinent questions and answers (especially if the talk is particularly inspiring or controversial). If however, all time has expired for that speaker, it is acceptable to ask the audience to discuss issues with that speaker after the end of the session. It is up to you as the Session Chair to ensure that ALL speakers receive their allotted time and that the audience have opportunity for their questions and comments.

Organizing Committee wants to promote audience feedback whenever the speakers are presenting products, directions or methodologies. It is, therefore, important to have these speakers honor at least a minimum of 5/10-minute question/answer/comment/panel discussion period.

Inform your speakers of the exact time that each of their talks are to begin and remind them that attendees are free to get up and move to another session after each talk. Two or three minutes should be allocated for this anticipated movement of people from session to session. Further explain that because of this expected movement, it is particularly important for each talk to finish on time AND for the next speaker to begin at the appropriate time (even if the previous speaker ends early). You can help facilitate a smooth change between speakers by asking the next speaker to begin moving toward the front and even switching laptops while the questions and answer session unfolds.

When Your Session Begins

Concern yourself with the environment - check sound and lights. If there are problems, either a Local Arrangements Committee staff member will assist or someone could be sent to the nearby help desk for assistance. Directly ask members of the audience if they can see you and hear you clearly. Your audience will appreciate that you are in charge and concerned about them and the quality of the session.

Using the microphone, formally announce the beginning of the session. If needed, politely encourage the audience to settle into their seats and conclude their conversations.

Introduce yourself as Session Chair and give your affiliation.

Ask attendees to complete a Technical Presentation Evaluation Form for each talk during your session.

For each talk, introduce the speaker; give their affiliation and the title of their talk. It is nice to give a brief introduction of the speaker -- perhaps their background, or how their talk fits into the scheme of the session or conference. You may wish to use the published abstract as a starting point for this "introduction" material.

During Each Presentation

It is up to you as the Session Chair to assist your speakers if there are problems. If the speaker's presentation is not displaying well, please find assistance to adjust the equipment. If lights need to be dimmed, please ask someone(Local Arrangements Committee staff member) to do it. If the speaker cannot be heard or cannot be seen, you should politely try to correct the situation.

You must keep track of elapsed time during a presentation:

At 20 minutes of a 25-minute talk, give a *signal* to the speaker (could be card raised, or low voice). Adjust as necessary for longer presentations.

Question/Answer Period: If time permits, the Session Chair should invite questions if the speaker does not do this.

An excellent Session Chair will have at least one general question ready for each speaker in order to help get the discussion off the ground, should the audience be reticent.

A really excellent Session Chair will actually ask each speaker for a potential "seed" question for you to ask should the opportunity be available!

When questions are asked, make every effort to get a microphone to the questioner (more important for the large general sessions than for the parallel sessions). If this is not possible, remind the speaker to repeat the questions, or repeat the question yourself if you are in a better position to hear the question. Use your own judgment regarding the need for this depending on room acoustics.

As the allotted time for the speaker's talk ends, initiate applause for the speaker.

At the End of the Session

When the last speaker's presentation and questions/answers have concluded, THANK the audience for attending and state that your session is now completed.

Remind attendees to go to the online evaluation system shortly before leaving the conference and complete their evaluations. The link is listed in the program and the pocket schedule.

Thus end your duties as Session Chair! OMICS Group is vital only through your volunteerism and participation.

Thank you again for your help

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