

INFORMATION FOR CHAIRS, RESPONDENTS, AND PRESENTERS

Responsibilities of Program Chairs

- ◆ Please welcome the audience and presenters to the program. Give the title of the program and indicate the unit sponsor.
- ◆ Introduce all presenters at the beginning of the program but do not take too much time. Include their affiliation and, if appropriate, a word about their interests. (You may ask for biographical notes from each participant prior to the convention.) Make sure you pronounce the presenters' names correctly and that you have accurate titles and affiliations. Also check for any changes in presentation titles and authors. In case of multiple authors, make sure you know who is presenting and who may be attending as a member of the audience. You may also want to introduce each presenter and paper title prior to his or her presentation.
- ◆ Keep time and give each speaker a signal at an agreed-upon point. Give all speakers a final one-minute warning. You may give verbal signals to presenters ("You have three more minutes" or pass a card to the speaker indicating remaining minutes. If you prefer, appoint a timekeeper in the audience so the presenter can easily see the time signals. Note: Most programs are 75 minutes long. Usually it takes a few minutes for the audience to get settled, 5 minutes for your introductions, a few minutes for transitions, and 15 minutes at the end of the program for respondent comments and/or audience questions. Divide the number of presentations into the remaining minutes. Generally, a presenter should be prepared to speak for 8-12 minutes.
- ◆ If there is time, lead a discussion by recognizing audience members and regulating the length of questions and comments.
- ◆ At the conclusion of the program, thank the participants. Alert the audience to other programs sponsored by your unit, organization, or special program series. Invite them to attend your business meeting (Specify time and place). Encourage audience members to support and submit programs to your unit in the future.
- ◆ Count the number of audience members in attendance—including you, the presenters, and respondent(s). You may be asked to share this information with your unit. Please be as accurate as possible—include those who leave as well as latecomers. Attendance records are used for the purpose of scheduling similar programs for appropriately sized rooms at future conventions.

- ◆ Report any problems (room size, equipment, lighting, etc.) or suggestions for future programs emerging from participant observations or audience discussions to your next unit. planner.

Responsibilities of Program Respondents

- ◆ Respondents can be an important part of the scholarly experience. This is especially true for students and first-time presenters.
- ◆ A respondent's task may vary depending on the type of program. Respondents may react to individual papers and/or provide comments about the contributions of all papers to a larger body of research and scholarship.
- ◆ Respondents are encouraged to comment on a paper's positive aspects as well as make recommendations for improvement or critiques of methodologies and conclusions. A respondent should not disparage a paper or presenter in public. Harsh criticism should be avoided or may be provided in writing.
- ◆ Respondents should develop a set of useful questions that stimulate discussion among presenters and audience members. A Respondents should encourage audience members to direct questions to program presenters.
- ◆ Respondents should receive program papers in enough time to prepare comments for questions. Individuals serving in these roles may set their own deadline for papers and alert the program planner and participants about the latest date they are willing to take papers for comment. Respondents should not be expected to read papers at the last minute or fully respond to papers they hear in program presentations.
- ◆ Program planners should urge program panelists to meet respondent deadlines or risk public embarrassment at the convention.

Advice for Convention Presenters

"Why can't communication scholars communicate better?" is a common complaint from convention audiences. Perhaps the problem needs to be reworded given that communication scholars are among the best communicators in academia. A better question is this: "What strategies improve convention presentations?" The following pieces of advice represent a collection of suggestions from successful presenters.

- ◆ Determine, in advance, the purpose of your presentation. What do you want your audience to know, understand, believe, and/or do? Why is this

paper important? Why should the audience read the paper and heed its conclusions? How does this paper advance and impact other research, scholarship, and practice?

- ◆ Deliver a well-prepared extemporaneous talk. Please, do not try to read your entire paper or major excerpts. Certainly, you can read critical sections but avoid a manuscript speech. Use all the skills of a good public presenter: extemporaneous style, audience-focus, and conversational style. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for and commitment to your work by preparing and presenting it well.
- ◆ Focus your presentation on your conclusions, using most of your speaking time to share your results, conclusions, and/or recommendations. Provide a brief overview of your methodology and results. Let audience members read about your methodology in detail.
- ◆ Stay within your time limit, if nothing else as a courtesy for those who follow you. Select material that can be presented within your time limit. If your chair doesn't time you, bring a stopwatch and use it during your presentation.
- ◆ Send a copy of your paper to your respondent well in advance of the convention. As a professional courtesy, you may want to send a copy to your fellow presenters and chair right before the convention.
- ◆ Bring ample copies of your paper to the convention. As an alternative, you can provide a summary of your paper and a Web address from which audience members can download your entire paper. Remember that NCA provides a Paper Distribution Center. Make sure you give a clean, unstapled copy of your paper to that service so they can offer copies to conventioners who could not attend your program.
- ◆ Remember that your paper has been competitively selected. Your selection as a presenter is a professional privilege. The quality of your presentation will impact your professional reputation as well as the reputation of your institution.