# SSR Program Committee: Standard Operating Procedures

Bylaws Article XI, Section 4(b): Program Committee: The Program Committee composed of 10 or more Members of the Society shall be responsible for arranging programs for the scientific meetings of the Society. The Committee shall select papers to be presented, establish procedures to review abstracts, review abstracts, and prepare a program structure. It shall advertise the meetings and integrate its activities with the SSR Business Office. The Committee shall evaluate past programs, assess the feasibility of alterations in program structure, and make recommendations as appropriate to the Board of Directors.

***Duties of the Program Committee Chair(s)***

# 21 months (November-January) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Establish Executive Committee of 5 to 6 people to assist the Chair and Co-Chair with meeting organization tasks. Note that Executive committee members should not be invited speakers at the annual meeting.
* Establish a theme and general organization of the program (with President)
* Assist President to designate Committee members for Board approval at Mid- Winter Board Meeting. Include previous and future Program Chairs on Program committee.
* Identify potential speakers for the various plenary lectures: Keynote Address, President's Symposium, State-of-the-Art Lectures, Historical Perspectives, etc.
* Develop list of suggested module themes and possible session topics and organizers
* Schedule meeting with Program Committee at Annual Meeting through Business Office

# 18 months (February-May) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Using information from past meetings, prepare draft meeting budget in consultation with Treasurer and SSR Business Office.
  1. This budget should include speaker budget with details on reimbursement for each group including exchange speakers
* Establish Committee schedule from Future Meeting Timetable (prepared by SSR office)
* Organize modules and other program elements
  1. Communicate with SSR Business Office about venue contract details regarding meeting space and duration to plan for: (a) how many concurrent sessions are possible (for platform sessions and for modules); and (b) meeting schedule, including how many module sessions, how many talks per module session, when plenary lectures, module sessions, and platform sessions will occur, etc. Determine the exact date and hour of the start/end of program activities, which requires consideration of arrival and departure logistics, such as common flight paths and hotel check in time.
  2. Organize “Call for program suggestions” website with SSR Business Office, arrange for email to be sent to SSR members to provide their program ideas and speaker suggestions. Deadline for suggestions from the membership should be late Spring or early Summer (~June 1) before the preceding Annual Meeting, so that Program Committee can act on suggestions over the summer, a year in advance of the Annual Meeting being planned.
* Review the SSR Annual Meeting agreements (along with Business Office)
  1. Determine the number of exchange speakers that need to be accommodated in the program and if there are specific requirements for the sessions in which they will speak in.
  2. Determine the Named session types (plenary, concurrent session, etc.) and preferred topics as outlined by specific agreements.
  3. Identify any Awards or Honors that the Program Committee will be responsible for assigning, e.g., Anita Payne New Perspectives on Reproductive Biology Lecture and review the process for selection.

# 15 months (May-July) before the planned Annual meeting

* Work with President to invite plenary lecture speakers (e.g., Keynote Address, President's Symposium, State-of-the-Art, etc.)
* Communicate program details (e.g., confirmed plenary speakers, modules themes and possible session titles) to Development Committee.
* Organize program suggestions from membership and ad hoc Program Committee in advance of the preceding Annual Meeting.

# At the preceding Annual Meeting:

* Meet with regular and ad hoc Program Committee members to:

1. Discuss committee functions.
2. Review policies:
   * Program Committee members cannot speak at the Annual Meeting
   * Module speakers should not have spoken at any of the three previous meetings.
   * Module speakers should represent the full diversity of the SSR membership (gender, research topics, career level, geographical locations, underrepresented minority, etc.).
   * At least 50% of module speakers should be SSR members.
3. Present program theme and plenary speakers (e.g., Keynote, State-of-the- Art, and President's Symposium).
4. Provide status report on the module sessions and discuss ideas regarding modules.
5. Provide overview of abstract review procedures including role for Program Committee members.

* Meet with SSR Executive Director and staff for overview of abstract submission and abstract review website; review communications with speakers and chairs of sessions, etc.
* If desired, meet with Award Committee Chair to set up cooperative review process.

# 12 months (July-August) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Visit meeting site, view rooms available for plenary lectures, module sessions, platform sessions, and poster sessions (size, location, access, etc.).
  1. Combining this travel with Annual Meeting helps international attendees attend site visit (if possible).
* Finalize module sessions, including identification of speakers.

1. If desired, organize module teams and team leaders from Program Committee membership.
2. Compile ideas that fit thematically for a given module(s). Involve module team leaders in this task if appropriate.
3. Communicate with module teams about plans for specific module sessions – *e.g*., 2 to 4 potential speakers per session, inclusion of platform presentations, whether the modules want any "special" events, such as module-specific keynote lecture or debate session, etc.
   * Assign speaker ranking and other planning to the appropriate module teams or other subset of the Program Committee.
   * Keep in mind need for SSR member speakers (>50%) and need for speaker diversity (gender, research topics, career level, geographical locations, underrepresented minority, etc.).
4. Program Committee chair(s) refine and finalize module topics based on suggestions, adjusting to achieve balance, avoid repetition, and minimize overlap.
   * Avoid inviting module speakers who have talked at one of the three previous meetings.
5. Determine who will be the Exchange Speakers from various Societies as this information becomes available, with assistance of President and Business Office. Place Exchange Speakers into modules consistent with their topics of interest and the Speaker Agreements.
6. Invitations of module speakers should begin as soon as the full line-up of all the modules is complete.
   * Determine who will invite the module speakers – Program Committee chair(s) or module team leaders.

# 10 months (September) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Work with Business Office to block out program schedule (times and dates of lectures, symposia, slide sessions, poster sessions, etc.) using meeting room information provided by Business Office
* Complete invitations to module speakers
* Continue to communicate program details to Development Committee

# 9 months (October-November) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Preliminary program highlights (themes, titles of minisymposia, speakers) to Business Office
* Ensure that module sessions are organized, speakers have been invited and have accepted, titles of talks determined, organizers have forwarded speakers’ addresses to you and Business Office
* Identify and invite module session leaders/chairs and inform them of expected duties (presenting a short session introduction, if this is planned for the program; facilitating discussion during the Q&A periods).
* Select recipients of any Awards or Honors that the Program Committee is responsible for assigning (e.g., Anita Payne Lecture)
* If desired, identify Trainee Guides who will communicate with plenary speakers in advance of meeting and greet them on arrival.

# 7 months (December-January) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Proof program information in abstract packet
* Work with the SSR Business Office on Abstract Submission site launch.
* Finalize program organization and assignment of time slots
* Organize abstract review subcommittees
  1. Choose abstract review team leaders from Program Committee and volunteers when Program Committee does not have expertise
  2. Abstract review team leaders select one to three other members, depending on the anticipated number of abstracts for that team
  3. No trainees can serve on abstract review committees because the scores are used for Trainee Awards purposes
  4. Coordinate with Awards Committee Chair to identify reviewers for each abstract review team to review for the Trainee Merit Awards and Trainee Research Awards. At least one Awards committee member should be on each review team.

# 6 months (January) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Write report for Midwinter Board meeting
* Attend Midwinter Board meeting (virtually)
* If relevant, send instructions to Trainee Guides regarding interactions with plenary speakers.

# 5 months (February-March) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Alert abstract review subcommittee and remind them of review guidelines (timing depends on abstract deadline and availability of abstracts on the website)
* Abstract review subcommittees:

1. Review and rank abstracts and select abstracts for platform talks and poster sessions
2. Program committee chair(s) work with module session leaders/chairs and abstract review team leaders to select abstracts for platform sessions and for module sessions. Note: Awards committee needs to identify their finalists for the trainee oral session before abstracts can be selected for module platform presentations.
3. Contact all presenters (personally or via module session leaders/chairs) for platform talks by email to verify that they will attend the meeting and are willing to speak.

* Compile all poster and platform sessions, determine order and daily schedule, adjust for balance, distribution of topics, and room size (size of room needed is a best guess, related to number of abstracts submitted in category)
* Check platform sessions for duplicate selection of abstracts or content overlap with other sessions
* Identify, invite, and confirm platform session co-chairs
* Write to Program Committee members, Trainee Affairs Committee members, and other SSR colleagues to begin to identify trainees who can serve as session co- chairs for the module sessions and platform sessions.
* Finalize lists of abstracts for platform sessions (session titles, chairs/ co-chairs, speakers, sequence of talks) and abstract category areas for poster sessions to SSR Office.
* Determine if there is going to be a call for Late-breaking Abstracts. If so, determine submission deadline, plan for review, coordinating with the Business Office.

# 3 months (April) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Identify, invite, and confirm platform session trainee co-chairs, ensuring that trainee co-chair is not speaking in the session they are moderating.
* Abstracts are due for invited talks (module invited talks, also plenary lectures if they are to be included in the Program)
* Confirm final room assignments and locations for all scientific sessions with Business Office.

# 2 months (May) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Proof the Meeting program

# 1 month (June) before the planned Annual Meeting:

* Send reminders to all speakers and session leaders to provide information about when the talks are, the specific length of their talk, how the session chair will manage the time and warn them of cut-off, etc.
* If the program committee opts to have module session leaders give a short introduction of 3-5 minutes before the invited module speakers begin, send separate reminders to the session leaders, including information about this introduction.
* Program is listed on the SSR Website.
* Be prepared to deal with problems and misunderstandings (abstracts not assigned to slide sessions, inconvenient scheduling of sessions or individual presentations, failure of first authors on abstracts to register, failure of invited speakers to register, requests that presentations be made by someone other than the first author, late requests for travel support, abstract withdrawals, visa problems, program glitches, etc.)
* Send platform session Chairs and Co-Chairs their instructions.
* Write Committee report to Board of Directors for delivery at the Annual Meeting

# At the Annual Meeting:

* Work with Business Office and trainee volunteers to record abstract numbers of no- shows for posters (no-shows will receive a letter from the President)
* Monitor concurrent sessions to see that Chairs are keeping sessions on schedule
* Attend meeting of next Program Committee
* Present post-meeting Committee report to Board of Directors

# 1 month (July-August) after the Annual Meeting:

* Ensure that the final list of speakers is included in a searchable spreadsheet.
* Put suggested changes onto SOP document for future consideration
* Business Office to compile final electronic documents for use by future Program Committee Chairs
  1. Final meeting overall schedule (single page template)
  2. Updated searchable electronic record with speaker information for past 5 yrs
  3. Budget information
  4. Invitation templates
  5. SSR Annual Meeting agreements with required speakers and sessions
  6. Program Committee reports
  7. Abstract information, including categories and number of submissions in each category

Respectfully submitted,

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