

## Organizing scientific meetings

## AUGUST EPPLE

Professor of Pathology, Anatomy and Cell Biology Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia



## Contents

Pr	X111	
Ac	cknowledgments	xiv
1	Introduction: what can go wrong?	1
2	The decision: to run or not to run	3
	2.1 Are you sure?	3
	2.1.1 Experience and commitment	3
	2.1.2 Purpose and quality of the meeting	4
	2.1.3 Responsibilities and rewards	4
	2.2 Can you do it?	5
	2.2.1 Money	. 5
	2.2.2 Time	. 5
	2.2.3 Local conditions and resources	6
	2.2.4 Sponsorships	7
	2.3 Should you do it?	7
3	Scientific and related events: variety delights	9
	3.1 Scientific events	9
	3.1.1 Lectures	9
	3.1.1.1 Plenary or Main Lectures	10
	3.1.1.2 Seminar-Style Lectures	11
	3.1.1.3 State-of-the-Art Lectures	11
	3.1.1.4 Short Communications	12
	3.1.1.5 After-Dinner Talks	13
	3.1.1.6 Closing Lectures	13
	3.1.2 Poster Sessions	14
	3.1.3 Colloquia and Round Table Conferences	17
	3.1.4 Workshops	18
	3.1.4.1 'Hands-On' Workshops	18
	3.1.4.2 Discussion Workshops	19

vii

...

	3.1.4.3 Socratic Workshops	19
	3.1.4.4 Open Workshops	23
	3.1.5 Automated slide presentations, video tapes and films	- 23
	3.1.6 Scientific and technological demonstrations	24
	3.2 General and Business Sessions	25
	3.3 Forums	26
	3.4 Commercial exhibits	26
	3.5 Disruptive demonstrations	27
4	Social events: something for every taste and budget	29
	4.1 Scheduling and options	29
	4.1.1 Minimeetings	29
	4.1.2 Meetings of longer duration	29
	4.2 Suggestions	31
	4.2.1 The setting	31
	4.2.2 Food	32
	4.2.3 Beverages	32
	4.2.4 Entertainment	33
	4.2.5 Excursions	35
5	The program: how to accommodate pigs in a poke	37
	5.1 Regional meetings	38
1	5.2 Small research conferences	38
	5.3 Major meetings	39
	5.4 Summary and recommendations	43
6	Selection of the meeting site: a touch of Russian roulette	44
	6.1 General considerations	44
	6.1.1 Proximity of meeting site and accommodation	45
	6.1.2 Location and accessibility	46
	6.1.3 Safety	47
	6.1.4 Medical care	47
	6.1.5 Baby sitting service	. 48
	6.1.6 Advance payments	48
	6.2 Selection of hotels and meeting facilities	48
	6.2.1 Obvious criteria	48
	6.2.1.1 Accommodation	48
	6.2.1.2 Meeting rooms and equipment	49
	6.2.1.3 Gastronomy	50
	6.2.2 Subtle criteria	51
	6.3 Special considerations at international meetings	52
	6.3.1 The political situation	52
	6.3.2 Immigration policies	52

.

## Contents

	6.3.3 Attitude towards foreigners	52
	6.3.4 Financial stability	53
	6.3.5 Strikes	53
7	The dates of the meeting: you can't win	54
8	Publications: cruel and unusual punishment	56
	8.1 Weighing the pros and cons	56
	8.2 Abstracts	57
	8.3 Proceedings	59
	8.3.1 Once more: should you really go ahead?	59
	8.3.2 Deadlines and dead lines	60
	8.3.3 Reviews: are they worth the pain?	62
	8.3.4 Selection of coeditors	63
	8.3.5 Selection of a publisher	63
	8.3.6 Selection of contributors	66
	8.4 Session reports and printed discussions	68
9	Selection of participants: how to lose old friends and make new enemies	70
	9.1 General audience	70
	9.2 Participants in key roles	71
	9.2.1 Speakers	71
	9.2.2 Colloquium moderators and panelists	72
	9.2.3 Workshop leaders and participants	72
	9.2.4 Forum moderators	73
	9.2.5 Session chairs	73
	9.3 Whom not to invite	74
10	Committees: you have to live with them	77
	10.1 Mini-Machiavellian management	77
1	10.1.1 Making and breaking of committees	77
	10.1.2 Mundus vult decipi	79
	10.2 Standard committees	80
	10.2.1 Organizing and program committees	80
	10.2.2 Local committees	80
	10.3 Other committees	81
11	Accompanists: you better love'm	83
12	Office and staff: don't take chances	86
13	The budget: a jungle with pitfalls	89
	13.1 Initial consultations	89

--

۰.

ix

Contents

x	
	13.2 Instant savings
	13.3 Expenses
	13.3.1 Expected expenses
	13.3.2 Contingency funds
	13.3.2.1 Before the meeting
	13.3.2.2 During the meeting
	13.3.2.3 After the meeting
	13.3.3 Cost overrun
	13.4 Initial budget estimate
	13.5 Excess funds
14	Fund raising: some would rather see their dentist
	14.1 Basic strategies
	14.2 Preparation of formal applications
15	Allocation of travel support: not much fun either
	15.1 Some food for thought
	15.2 Support for participants from 'developing' countries
	15.3 Setting priorities for support
16	Schedule of preparations: from dream to reality
	16.1 Estimated time frames for preparations
	16.2 Factors affecting the time frames
	16.3 A stepwise approach for minor meetings
	16.3.1 Informal research conferences
	16.3.2 Regional research conferences and similar meetings
	16.4 A stepwise approach to national or international major meetings
17	Announcements, programs, and related information: clarity pays
	17.1 First announcement
	17.2 Second announcement
	17.2.1 Summary of deadlines
	17.2.2 Mode of payment
	17.2.3 Program information
)	
;	17.2.5 Postsymposium excursions
	17.2.6 Accompanists' program
	17.2.7 Travel support
	17.2.8 Travel discounts
	17.2.9 General information
	17.3 Final program

- 17.4 Abstract volume
- 17.5 List of exhibitors

18 Design	Design of forms, nametags, tickets, signs and stickers: how about using					
commo	common sense?					
18.1 Fo	rms	140				
18	.1.1 General layout	140				
18	.1.2 Potential problems at international meetings	141				
18.2 Na	umetags	143				
18.3 Ti	ckets	144				
18.4 Di	18.4 Direction signs					
18.5 Ot	her signs	144				
18.6 Sti	ickers	145				
19 Satellite	e meetings: think twice	146				
20 Checkli	st of important no-nos	148				
Appendix A	Poster presentations	149				
Appendix B	Outline of a general schedule for an international meeting	151				
Appendix C	Excerpts from a letter to prospective panelists of a Colloquium	154				
Appendix D	Excerpts from a letter to the moderators of Colloquia	155				
Appendix E	Invitation to participate in a Socratic Workshop	156				
Appendix F	Excerpts from a letter to leaders of Socratic Workshops	157				
Appendix G	Example of a 'statement of research interests' for a Socratic Workshop	158				
Appendix H	Service contract with an exposition service	159				
Appendix I	Contract with a congress hotel	161				
Appendix J	Suggestions for the preparation of abstracts and abstract forms					
	for scientific presentations	164				
Appendix K	Letter with clout to a manuscript delinquent	166				
Appendix L	Schedule for staff of an international meeting	167				
Appendix M	Checklist of equipment and supplies for the registration desk of a					
	major meeting	171				
Appendix N	Equipment and supplies for meeting rooms	173				
Appendix O	Example of a letter/form confirming attendance of prospective					
	participants in various events of a meeting	174				
Appendix P	Calculation of fees	175				
	Suggestions for a hotel reservation form	177				
Appendix R	Summary of daily program schedule	180				
Index		181				

ŧ