

Considerations to Promote Diversity at American Society of Pharmacognosy Meetings

Editorials at [Nature](#), [PNAS](#), and [Science](#) (to highlight a few) have stated the reasons why diversity enriches science. As part of the ASP's ongoing effort to make access to scientific opportunity more equitable, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has drafted the following guidelines to promote diversity and equity at ASP meetings.

- In preparing to plan a meeting, refer to this resource on [Inclusive Scientific Meetings](#). A few other resources include a [conference planning checklist](#) to promote diversity, an article on how other societies are [addressing gender bias in conferences](#), and a collection of articles from *Nature* in [achieving diversity in research](#).
- The committee tasked with selecting speakers should be as diverse as possible. Here we draw from a definition of diversity from the [Inclusive Scientific Meetings](#) guide as “the visible and invisible physical and social characteristics that make an individual or group of individuals different from one another.” These could include (but are not limited to) career stage, age, social class, race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, physical ability, and sexual orientation.
- Set up clear goals as to what you hope to achieve in terms of diversity in the speakers. What balance are you aiming for? Some guidelines include having the diversity of speakers and poster presenters be representative of the application pool or of the community. For example, since approximately half of the ASP membership identify as female, then aiming to have the meeting speakers reflect this could be a measurable goal.
- Keeping session topics broad may help attract a broader base of participants; if the topic is too specialized, it will likely have a less diverse pool of expert speakers. Similarly, certain areas may attract a more diverse group of speakers. Consider this before selecting topics for the meeting. *Diversity in representation should be a topic of discussion early in the planning process, i.e. before the topics for the conference are selected.*
- Encourage committee members to use their personal networks to increase the diversity of speakers, especially Keynote Speakers.
- Encourage committee members to go *beyond* the usual network to find additional speakers. Ask colleagues for recommendations, try twitter, and ask students and postdocs for their recommendations.
- When a call for abstracts is issued, explicitly encourage the participation of a diverse demographic (sex/gender, race/ethnicity, age, physical ability, career stage).
- During abstract submission, ask when the participant last presented at the ASP conference. Make a goal to include at least one abstract from a speaker that has not presented before in each session.
- Establish a clear rubric for selecting speakers prior to reviewing abstracts or nominations. In doing so, it is worthwhile to consider not only the CV of the potential speaker, but also other contributions to the profession, such as mentoring and advancement of inclusivity efforts. Other great recommendations for setting up rubrics and evaluating speakers are included in the resource on [Inclusive Scientific Meetings](#).

- Once a potential final speaker list is put together, make sure representation is balanced across different types of presentations including keynotes, session chairs, and throughout the program. Compare the list against your goals and do adjustments prior to its release.
- See the Inclusive Scientific Meetings guide for more recommendations on how to run an inclusive meeting, including how to moderate Q & A sessions to give expression to different voices, and considerations for making the venue accessible to diverse participants.
- During the meeting, evaluate representation in terms of diversity of attendees, their participation, and the balance in speakers. Share the numbers at the end of the meeting or with the organizing committee for the next annual meeting.
- After the meeting, seek feedback from attendees about their sense of inclusion and belonging. Ask the organizing committees to evaluate their process and goals.
- After the meeting, have a committee meeting to discuss what worked, areas that need work or could improve, and what did not work. Share results with the organizing committee for the next meeting.