

# Guidelines for Organizing a Successful PNW NExT Session

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These are general guidelines that can be used to organize a NExT session (panel discussion, presentation, etc.), they are not meant to be restrictions, but suggestions, based on comments from the group over the years. Some of the suggestions refer to panel discussions, others can be used in organizing any type of session.

## Timeline:

- **2-3 months before the meeting:** Suggest topics to NExT list, get feedback from the list and from the program committee. For a panel discussion, have one or two speakers in mind to start, and solicit names for others (ask the program committee for suggestions). First-time organizers may wish to have a co-organizer - the program committee may be able to suggest names.
- **1-2 months before the meeting:** Make sure all speakers are confirmed. Submit title, brief abstract for session, AV needs and proposed length of time to program chair along with the name, affiliation, and contact information (postal and e-mail address) for each speaker and organizer of the session. Share title and abstract with speakers.
- **1 month before the meeting:** Confirm details with speakers and talk with them about their roles, structure, length of panel or talk, other speakers, etc. In planning the structure of any session, be sure to leave time for discussion. Also, if there is no discussion, you may wish to have a few leading questions prepared that might generate some discussion.
- **At the meeting:** Before your session, greet each of your speakers - introduce yourself if you do not already know the speakers. Also make sure the speakers know one another. Go over the structure of the session before it begins, check on AV needs. At the beginning of the session introduce yourself and the speakers. Share the structure of the session with the audience. When the session is over thank the speakers.
- **After the meeting.** Be sure to thank all speakers in writing.

## Speakers:

- 3 or 4 speakers per session is generally appropriate (more on a panel can be overwhelming, and 3-15 min talks fill an hour well with questions).
- Get the name, affiliation and contact info (postal and e-mail) for each speaker.
- Go over with each speaker the structure of the panel and what their role is.
- Try to get a variety of speakers - including some that are NOT in NExT. Often the visiting MAA speakers are interested in participating in NExT - be sure to ask the program committee about this as this is a great way to include new speakers from outside the PNW in our meeting.
- If you need assistance getting speakers, the NExT list, the program committee, and colleagues are good resources.
- For a panel discussion, it is important to leave enough time for discussion and questions; it should be stressed that panelists should speak for 3-5 minutes to give a flavour of who they are and to share their experience/thoughts with this topic. If each panelists speaks for 10-15 minutes, giving their own presentation, then there is usually not time for discussion.
- Generally, panel moderators should not speak in their own session.