

## GUIDELINES AND TIPS FOR PRESENTERS

### PANEL PROCEDURE

The panel procedure is primarily intended to help the panelists strengthen their research by testing their hypotheses before a live audience. We believe this happens best when the discussant, who has read the papers and is familiar with the field, is given time to critique the papers briefly but constructively before taking questions from the audience.

- *Welcome.* After a brief welcome and self-introduction, the discussant introduces the first panelist.
- *Panel Presentations.* The first panelist then presents at the lectern for **up to 15 minutes**. The discussant introduces each panelist in turn, following the order listed on the program. If a panelist is late, the panel begins on time, and the latecomer goes last.

*Note on Timekeeping.* It is *imperative* to keep strictly within the 15 minutes allotted for your presentation. Failing to do so disadvantages fellow panelists in particular. During panelists' presentations, the discussant will have time cards to alert them to the time remaining and is asked to interrupt politely but firmly should a presentation exceed 15 minutes.

- *Discussant Critique.* After the presentations, the discussant takes the lectern to offer constructive but critical comments on all the papers (up to **10 minutes** total for all papers).
- *Q&A.* Time remaining is for questions from the audience, with the discussant moderating.

### TIPS FOR PRESENTING

If you are new or inexperienced at orally presenting a written paper, you're not the first. The following tips may help demystify the conference talk. Those with experience may also find them helpful.

- (1) **Make two or three points, and repeat each of them twice.** Revise your written paper into a "script" with shorter sentences and conversational language wherever possible. Because your discussant will critique your ideas, the audience doesn't need to hear—and may have a hard time following—each piece of information and each segment of your argument when you stand to speak. Give them the essential highlights, especially if you have a long paper with plentiful or complex information.
- (2) **7–8 pages, no more.** One double-spaced page takes about 2 minutes to read at normal pace. So in your 15 minutes you'll have time to read about 7–8 double-spaced pages. It is okay to read from a text. But look up frequently and resist the urge to read too fast or monotonously. Leaving things unsaid allows interested audience members to ask questions during Q&A and while socializing later. A breathless 20-pager in 15 minutes, however, will almost surely turn off even the most interested listener.
- (3) **For slides, less is more.** If you have a Powerpoint or Prezi presentation, put as little text on each slide as possible, and be sure to use everything you put in the slides. Most people cannot read blocks of text and follow your talk simultaneously. Let the slides provide images and keywords, but let your own voice inform the audience. The slides are an aid; you are the main event.
- (4) **Practice.** This will help you identify laborious passages or excessively long sentences. Practice aloud before a friend, a mirror, or to an imagined audience. Remember that you know your topic better than most of your audience; that goes a long way in calming nerves.