

Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry  
Annual Meeting Program Committee Guidelines  
2021

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## **Introduction**

The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry North America (SNA) annual meeting brings together environmental professionals to advance the society's [mission](#). The meeting is planned in a manner that is consistent with SETAC's [principles and values](#). Further, the meeting organization evolves based on the society's [strategic goals](#) and priorities. The meeting is an important scientific and community-building event for our membership. It is also an important financial event for SNA and is an integral part of SNA operations under the oversight of the board of directors (BOD). The organization of SNA annual meetings is a true collaboration between the SNA BOD, the SNA executive director (ED) and staff, and the SNA annual meeting program committee (program committee). The program committee develops the program (scientific and social) and assists with tasks as directed by the SNA staff and Program Committee Chair(s), with oversight from the BOD.

The SNA BOD has oversight authority for the annual meeting since the BOD responsibilities include directing SNA to hold an annual meeting and managing the programs of the society, and because the BOD has fiduciary responsibility over SNA finances, consistent with the SNA by-laws. As such, the BOD approves future meeting locations, meeting budgets and all the assumptions therein including format, number of participants, registration fees, and expenses; and the BOD receives frequent updates about meeting planning from the SNA ED. Further, the BOD appoints program committee chairs and approves the meeting program committee, the meeting theme, and the composition of the scientific sub-committee. **The charge to the program committee is to prepare the scientific and community-building programs of the annual meeting.** As such, the program committee has responsibility over the scientific program and collaborates with the office to plan SNA social and community-building activities given within any logistical and financial constraints.

The SNA annual meeting guidance document is designed to provide general instructions regarding meeting organization and describe the responsibilities of the BOD, SNA staff, SNA ED and the program committee. Developing and organizing the SNA annual meeting is a dynamic process shared by the SNA BOD, the SNA ED and staff and the program committee. Furthermore, new ideas may be incorporated into a meeting, though they may not necessarily be in these guidelines until they are proven or refined. New ideas should not be discounted because they are not in the guidelines. Flexibility is imperative. Staff will edit this document on an ongoing basis to incorporate lessons learned and new ideas.

This document and its appendices provide guidance for:

- 1) Approach for planning
- 2) Structure of SNA annual meeting
- 3) Structure, selection and commitments of the program committee
- 4) Responsibilities of the SNA ED, staff, and the program committee
- 5) Scientific program development; and the timeline for milestones, both prior to and during the annual meeting

### **Approach to Planning and Execution**

Following are principles that are used to develop the annual meeting.

- The annual meeting is the responsibility of the SNA BOD executed by staff with the help from volunteers, including the program committee.
- The SNA BOD is the ultimate decision maker over all aspects of the meeting.
- The BOD approves the chairs, the committee, and the budget of the meeting, and they maintain oversight through execution.
- The program committee members bring scientific excellence and local knowledge to the planning of the meeting program, and they function as the readily available volunteer pool.
- The SETAC staff bring their professional experience in various areas (project management, hospitality, planning, technology, communication, etc.) and institutional knowledge to the meeting. The staff maintain a pool of ideas and suggestions from year to year that are drawn from meeting satisfaction survey results.
- Twenty-four months before a meeting, the BOD solicits and identifies program committee chairs. The remainder of the program committee is approved by the BOD within 18 months prior to the corresponding annual meeting.
- To ensure innovation and continuous improvement, the program committee meets with relevant staff and the BOD executive committee as soon as they form. The program committee is briefed about the BOD strategic priorities and reviews the meeting budget with the ED.
- The program committee is expected to use a variety of communication tools to encourage and invite the SETAC membership to bring forth ideas that will address SETAC priorities (e.g., diversity, inclusion of a specific scientific area, or increased meeting sustainability). The ideas are evaluated and discussed collaboratively to assess where and how they can be incorporated into the meeting. Where budget is of concern, the ED can advise.
- The ED updates the BOD on meeting planning progress at every BOD meeting.
- The chair(s) of the program committee can be invited to the BOD meetings to provide updates to the BOD periodically. Touch points for these updates include when and if a theme is proposed, after session review, when plenary or keynote speakers are, or after abstract review when the preliminary science program is developed. (See **Appendix A** for timeline detail.)

### **Components of SNA Annual Meeting**

There are many facets to the SNA annual meeting, including the scientific program, social and networking activities, and side-events. The annual meeting planning schedule is summarized in **Appendix A**. The program committee member duties and time commitments are summarized in **Appendix B**.

The program committee collaborates heavily with staff on the scientific and social program. The scientific program typically includes daily scientific sessions and plenaries. For details about how the scientific program is developed, refer to **Appendix C**. Program committee members may also serve as volunteers during the meeting. Volunteer duties vary and include administrative (e.g., registration desk staff), technical (e.g., audio and video support), and hosting (e.g., interact with plenary speakers and meeting chairs) functions.

#### Opening and Closing Ceremonies

The SNA ED will work with the program committee chair(s) to plan and implement the opening and closing ceremonies.

#### Scientific Sessions

Sessions at SNA annual meetings typically refer to a thematic group of presentations given by meeting participants as organized by the session chairs. Several parallel sessions can occur at the same time at a meeting. Sessions can also be provided online virtually as on-demand (pre-recorded) or can be streamed either live or semi-live (e.g., pre-recorded played at a specified time followed with live Q&A). The presentations within the sessions can take a variety of formats (e.g., platform, poster, e-poster, poster corner, long- or short-form talks, panel discussion, and debates). Examples of some session formats used at SETAC meetings are discussed in detail in **Appendices C and D**. The SNA BOD welcomes innovations in session topics, formats, and lengths from the membership and will consider new suggestions as they are brought forth.

#### Plenary Sessions

SNA annual meetings typically include three or four plenary sessions (~one a day). Plenaries are timed not to overlap with other meeting activities so that all participants can attend. The program committee typically identifies topics and speakers for plenary talks in a manner consistent with SETAC [principles and values](#).

#### Side-Events

SNA annual meetings typically include side-events organized by staff in support of the board, committees, interest groups, affinity groups, and membership subsets (e.g., students). These events are organized by the SNA staff in conjunction with the various BOD committees, groups, and other relevant entities and are not the responsibility of the program committee. They are under the direct oversight of the BOD and presented for approval 4 months in advance of the meeting. As such, the BOD may choose to approve or not approve any activity in part or whole. This includes final approval on any potential speakers or invited guests featured at the event.

## **Structure, Selection, and Commitments of the Program Committee**

### **Structure of the Program Committee**

The program committee consists of two or three co-chair(s) and around 16 members who divide into either the scientific or the social subcommittee, to work on those two main aspects of the program, while the committee as a whole share some general responsibilities. Typically, each of the subcommittees are chaired by one of the meeting chairs and the third chair coordinates the shared duties of the entire committee. Staff, assisted by service providers, handle hospitality and logistics (venue, online platform, transportation, equipment, catering, etc.), marketing and communication, and all contracts including those with the venue, service providers, exhibitors, sponsors, and keynote speakers as necessary.

For continuity, a program committee chair of the annual meeting immediately prior to the one being organized is expected to transfer “lessons learned” from the previous meeting and share institutional knowledge. Ideas and lessons from this meeting between committees and staff are included in these guidelines as appropriate.

The scientific subcommittee is responsible for the development, organization, and evaluation of the scientific program for the SNA annual meeting. This subcommittee is composed of the program committee chairs, and other members in such a manner as to ensure balance in scientific expertise. The scientific subcommittee is supported by staff and augmented starting from session review with a future meeting chair. This scientific subcommittee develops and oversees all aspects of the scientific program, develops sessions requiring significant lead time (e.g., Spotlight Sessions, Tribute Sessions, and sessions using alternative formats), participates in the formal review of the proposed sessions, and reviews all submitted abstracts.

Subcommittee members are expected to make themselves available to SETAC members and to work with meeting participants who would like to help to plan sessions that require significant lead time (innovative formats, new topics, etc.). The scientific subcommittee should strive to have balanced representation among the various membership sectors and technical disciplines, geographic origin, and [foster inclusion](#) as a stand-alone subcommittee, while still adhering to the criteria for the selection of the entire program committee (below).

### **Selection of the Program Committee**

#### *Selection of Program Chair and Co-Chair(s)*

During the third quarter of each year, the SNA ED will issue an open call to members to serve as chairs of the meeting scheduled for two years subsequent. The ED and the BOD can solicit individuals, or members can self-nominate. The program committee chair and co-chairs are subject to the approval of the SNA BOD, which selects the final candidates considering SETAC principles and values and the following criteria.

A minimum of two chairs is required but three chairs is recommended. A three-chair model allows for tripartite representation (i.e., from academia, government, and business).

#### *Criteria for Selection of Program Committee Chairs*

Chairs must:

- 1) Reflect SETAC principle and values, including a demonstrated commitment to [diversity and inclusion](#)
- 2) Have a commitment from their employer that they will have the time and support necessary to chair the SNA annual meeting
- 3) Demonstrate leadership skills by being able to work effectively and on tight deadlines with a diverse group of volunteers
- 4) Engage and encourage volunteers, manage the activities of the program committee, and ensure program committee members are in compliance with their volunteer and financial responsibilities

#### *Selection of Members of the Program Committee*

During the second quarter of each year, the SNA ED will issue an open call to members to serve as volunteers on the program committee for the annual meeting planned for the following year. The SNA BOD, the chairs, and the ED can solicit individuals, or members can self-nominate. The program committee, including subcommittee appointment, is subject to approval by the SNA BOD.

The SNA ED will issue a second call for volunteers 1–2 months prior to the designated annual meeting and will be limited to self-nomination for those who can help during the meeting event. In both calls, nomination forms will be used to clearly indicate the availability of the volunteer applicant.

#### *Criteria for Selection of Members of the Program Committee*

The Program Committee should [foster diversity and inclusivity](#) and strive to have balanced representation of the various sectors comprising the SNA membership including,

- a. Academic, business, government, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- b. Professional and scientific disciplines (chemistry, toxicology, ecology, risk assessment, etc.)

It is understood that the program committee operate as volunteers, and those who are willing to help should be given some role, if possible, so long as they have a willingness to encourage, collaborate, and work with people they may not already know to implement an effective meeting.

#### Commitments of the Program Committee

There are two levels of commitment that can be made by members of the program committee.



**Long-term commitment (15 months)**

Members of the program committee agree to regularly participate in meeting planning and are expected to be available to volunteer during the meeting and fill-in wherever needed due to special situations or emergencies.

**Short-term commitment**

Members of the program committee will agree to fulfill of one or more tasks as requested by the chairs. Need for short-term help may be during planning or at the meeting.

Potential volunteers for the program committee are encouraged to consider their capacity and to volunteer as they are able. Chairs and co-chairs are expected to encourage and facilitate member involvement in meeting planning whether the members make the longer-term commitment or the shorter one.

**All Program Committee members are expected to register for the annual meeting as a condition of being on the Committee.** Limited funds or reduced registration fees may be available, at the discretion of the SNA executive director, to provide support to program committee chairs or members. Their level of effort and their contributions to the annual meeting will be considered.

**Responsibilities of the Program Committee**

Program Committee members are expected to commit to volunteering during the 12–18-month period prior to the meeting to help develop a robust program. Time commitment is outlined in **Appendix B**.

The responsibilities of implementing the annual meeting are shared between the SNA executive director and staff, program committee chair(s), and the program committee and are as follows:

SNA Executive Director and Staff

The executive director and staff are responsible for the mechanics of planning and implementing the SNA annual meeting. In this capacity they shall:

1. Plan the entire meeting from scoping to execution and closure
2. Strive for high standards of equity and inclusion, health and safety, and sustainability in planning the meeting
3. Investigate the facilities, feasibility, cost, and suitability of prospective annual meeting sites
4. Negotiate and contract for meeting facilities and equipment for the annual meeting
5. Recommend to the SNA BOD future SNA annual meeting sites based on the facilities, feasibility, cost, and suitability of the prospective sites
6. Receive solicitations from prospective annual meeting chairs for future years
7. Develop the meeting budget
8. Coordinate and solicit funding

9. Coordinate the mechanics and logistics of the annual meeting and ensure that the facility and contractors will meet all requirements and goals. This includes negotiating and signing contracts for vendors and facilities, such as electrical power, wireless, audio/visual, room reservations, supplies, equipment, and all aspects of banquets and functions, including meal and beverage service
10. Prepare physical and digital communication materials pertaining to the annual meeting, including, but not limited to, meeting announcements, signage, programs, badges, and press packets
11. Procure and manage meeting transportation, staff, security, insurance, medical service, supplies, equipment, and other support
12. Ensure compliance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA)
13. Manage session proposals and abstracts
14. Register attendees, speakers, press, exhibitors, and other participants at the SNA annual meeting
15. Collect registration and exhibitor fees, and be responsible for all financial arrangements and accounting, including keeping accounts, safekeeping of funds, and disbursement of funds to vendors and other creditors upon presentation of an itemized invoice
16. Develop a schedule of responsibilities, activities, and deadlines for the program chairs and committee
17. Negotiate and contract with plenary sessions keynote speakers, as needed

#### Program Committee Chair(s)

The program committee chair(s) shall:

Select the slate of volunteers from the self-nominations in accordance with the committee criteria. The slate is provided to the SNA BOD for final approval.

1. Within one month of BOD approval, meet with BOD to understand goals, roles and responsibilities (including fiscal), and clarify timelines for the annual meeting
2. Within one month of Program Committee selection, convene a meeting between BOD and full committee
3. Develop and present the plans for the meeting to the SNA BOD for approval including: meeting theme (if desired), plenary speakers, special sessions, and other side activities they may want to propose (e.g., a community engagement event)
4. Coordinate the scientific and social programs
5. Request assistance from the program committee members to identify potential meeting sponsors not on SETAC's previous sponsors list. The program committee assists by identifying specific contacts in different organizations that may be financial contributors to the meeting.
6. Coordinate and manage the volunteers during meeting and ensure there are enough volunteers to facilitate a smoothly operating meeting (in-person and virtual)
7. At the conclusion of the annual meeting, facilitate lessons learned for the next program committee.

### Scientific Subcommittee

The scientific subcommittee shall:

1. Develop a scientific program that is consistent with the goals of SNA, the meeting theme (if applicable), and the interests of the membership and guests, including facilitating the implementation of new session formats and/or topics. The subcommittee has full responsibility for drafting the Scientific Program.
2. Actively develop sessions requiring significant lead time (e.g., Spotlight Sessions, Tribute Sessions, and sessions using alternative formats)
3. Actively seek proposals from prospective session chairs for sessions that are consistent with the goals of the SNA and the annual meeting program committee.
4. Use the SETAC communication resources and staff to reach out to the SETAC membership generally for interest and ideas in prospective sessions and topics. The Scientific Subcommittee is encouraged to begin discussions with SETAC members prior to the formal call for session proposals as some ideas or sessions may require more thought and planning.
5. Coordinate with the SNA Science Committee to identify timely and/or emerging scientific issues and, if appropriate, work with the SNA Science Committee and others proposing such possible sessions to develop a coordinated suite of sessions for the annual meeting.
6. Work with and be the liaison between staff and the session chairs to develop strong scientifically based sessions that are of interest to the membership.
7. Review and recommend all submitted session proposals (including Spotlight Sessions and Tribute Sessions) for inclusion in the call(s) for abstracts, recommend unique sessions supporting the meeting theme, aid in developing the call(s) for abstracts, and communicate with the session organizers or chairs if questions arise concerning the proposals and sessions. If the scientific subcommittee lacks sufficient scientific expertise in the discipline of a proposed session, the subcommittee should make every effort to reach out to the session organizers with questions to understand the proposal.
8. Peer review abstracts to determine the scientific or technical merit of the research. This occurs during abstract review, covered later in this guidance (see the section below on Soliciting and Processing Abstracts and Setting Up Sessions). If an abstract cannot meet the scientific merit criteria, then it should be rejected as not meeting the standard for presentation. It is not incumbent upon the committee to accept every abstract submitted for presentation. Further policy guidance is available from the SNA BoD and the SETAC Office.
9. Develop the live scientific program schedule to reduce conflict in topics (i.e., parallel session on same topic).

### Social Subcommittee

Purpose of social subcommittee: Members of this subcommittee will plan events at the annual meeting to enhance community interactions and networking opportunities among attendees.

The **Social Subcommittee** shall:

1. Investigate local areas of interest to determine suitability for SNA annual meeting social functions.
2. Propose and develop social program activities for the meeting, such as:
  - a. Guest program and sightseeing activities
  - b. Tours of professionally interesting sites to take advantage of local environmental opportunities
  - c. Online events for virtual attendees
  - d. SNA fun run
  - e. Service project
3. Provide contacts to staff to negotiate appropriate contracts
4. Provide on-site tour support, especially if we opt not to use a Destination Management Company to manage the tours
5. If the Program Committee organizes a service project, this subcommittee will research local organizations and find a suitable partner. It is preferable to organize a project that will have a positive environmental impact.
6. Plan a community outreach event in accordance with **Appendix D**
7. Provide volunteer support to ensure the annual meeting is supported, as needed. If a hybrid meeting is being conducted, there may be opportunities for both in-person and virtual support (e.g., procure online moderators for virtual sessions).

#### **On-site Volunteer Coordinators**

A member of the program committee (could be a chair) should serve as the primary on-site volunteer coordinator assisted by a few others. The on-site volunteer coordinators will be needed to:

1. Schedule volunteers where needed
2. Provide guidance and instructions to the volunteers, including students, on their volunteer duties

#### **Volunteers at the Annual Meeting**

All program committee members are expected to serve as on-site volunteers during the meeting. The on-site volunteer coordinators will try to match students and volunteers with tasks based on interest, skill sets, and personal schedule.

#### **General**

The staff and program committee are expected to make sure that attendees are made to feel welcome. **Attendees are expected to adhere to [SETAC Policies](#) including SETAC's Code of Conduct and Ethics and the Meeting Policies.** Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the SNA Executive Director before any action is taken. Anyone who has concerns should be directed to the [SETAC Whistleblower Policy](#) and [Violation Reporting Form](#). Staff and volunteers are asked not to engage or comment on the reported concern and allow the ED to handle it per [problem resolution policy](#).

Following are some specific components of the annual meeting that are the responsibility of staff as assisted by on-site volunteers from the program committee or students.

### Setup

For on-site meetings, setup will be held the day prior to the start of the conference. Breakdown will begin in the afternoon of the last day of the conference. Times will vary. Chairs and any program committee members often find it useful to be arrive early to familiarize themselves with the venue and tasks.

### Registration Desk

For on-site meetings, volunteers may be asked to help at the registration desk. Duties will include handing out meeting attendees' registration packet, answering questions, directing attendees to various events, helping with exhibitors, directing attendees to facilities (e.g., first aid, the lactation room), and answering questions. At least one staff member will be available at all times to help field questions.

### Professional Training Courses

It is expected that select on-site volunteers will assist staff with some administrative tasks such as distributing materials; testing audio-visual equipment and/or computers; directing attendees to rooms; checking people against the training registration list; and other needs as they arise. It would be ideal for an assistant to remain in the room for the duration of each course throughout the day.

### Sessions

It is expected that select on-site volunteers will assist staff with some administrative tasks such as signage, ensuring that equipment is in working order, and ensuring that the session chairs and co-chairs are adhering to the published schedule of presentation times.

### Posters

On-site volunteers are needed during poster set-up and throughout the day, every day. Assistance is needed with set-up, documenting no-shows, reporting posters that do not adhere to the requirements, etc. Details pertaining to attending the posters will be covered on-site.

### Socials

On-site volunteers may be called upon to assist with social events and may include collecting tickets, directing people to transportation, etc. More details will be provided on-site.

On-site, a room will be provided for the committee to meet to discuss the meeting, problems, and successes.

**Appendix A. Annual Meeting Activities Schedule**

The activity schedule presented in **Appendix A** outlines the schedule for organizing and conducting the SNA annual meeting. The exact dates will vary slightly each year depending on the actual meeting dates. The schedule is open to revisions and improvements as necessary. Although the schedule is extensive, it does not include all activities and responsibilities. Contact staff for additional information. Staff are ultimately responsible for doing or facilitating all activities with the aid of program committee.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time prior to meeting</b>
Select annual meeting location	3 y
Open call for chairs, then selection & appointment by the BOD	2–3 y
Develop ideas for meeting design and graphic elements	1.5 y
Present draft budget to SNA BoD for approval	1.5 y
Present theme, if desired, to SNA BoD for approval (chairs)	15–18 mo
Meeting announcement	12–15 mo
Open call for committee volunteers	15–18 mo
Selection and appointment of the program committee by the BOD	
Begin publicity campaign	12 mo
Solicit sessions and training courses	10–12 mo
Identify keynotes and plenary speakers (PC)	10–12 mo
Develop plans for social programs	6–12 mo
Solicit exhibitors and meeting sponsors	3–12 mo
Announce call for abstracts	10 mo
Finalize training courses	5 mo
Deadline for receipt of abstracts	5 mo
Abstract review meeting	5 mo
Acceptance and rejection email notification	5 mo
Plan Side-events	5 mo
Publicize registration fees and deadlines	4 mo
Order meeting materials (furniture, print..etc)	3 mo
Prepare abstract book	2 mo
Call for volunteers (short-term on-site)	1–2 mo
Identify judges for best student presentations	1 mo
Finalize facility space requirements	1 mo
Finalize menus	1 mo
Prepare program errata sheets	2-3 wk
Attend annual meeting	November
Post-meeting debriefs of PC Chairs	2 wk after
Summarize the survey results	

## **Appendix B: Program Committee Members - Time Commitment**

There are many variables that impact the level of effort needed to run a great meeting. The staff will lean on members to volunteer for various duties and tasks as they arise. Program committee members, augmented by other volunteers as needed, comprise the pool of volunteers that help with the meeting prior to and during. Examples of potential volunteer duties, and typical level of effort is below. The time spent is cumulative based on position.

### **Program committee**

All program committee members are expected to:

- Attend one-hour, monthly program committee calls, starting 12–18 months prior to the meeting for progress updates and action items.
- Encourage and facilitate participation and ideas stemming from calls
- Volunteer during the meeting (~10–15 hours for the week)

### **Meeting Chairs**

Chairs are expected to:

- Attend one-hour, monthly calls with their subcommittee
- Execute action items from the calls and liaising with the staff and board (2-4 hours a month)

### **Scientific Subcommittee**

**Task timeline:** Beginning in January and extending through the annual meeting in November

**Number of hours involved:** 70–90 hours total over 11 months

Members of the scientific subcommittee are expected to:

- Attend one-hour, monthly calls meeting starting January of the meeting year, to formulate the scientific program and support the call for sessions
- Solicit colleagues and SETAC members for session proposals, ideas, and new formats (2–4 hours)
- Review sessions 6-8 month prior to the meeting; typically, March for a November meeting (8–10 hours)
- Review abstracts 5 month prior to the meeting; typically, June for a November meeting (40 hours)
- Develop the program 3 months prior to the meeting; typically, June for a November meeting (10 hours)

### **SETAC Social Subcommittee**

The level of effort for this committee vastly depends on the type and number of events they'd like to organize.

**Task timeline:** Beginning in the first quarter of the new year and extending through the annual meeting in November

**Number of hours involved:** 10–40 hours total over 11 months

Members are expected to at minimum:

- Plan social events (1–2 hours/month)
- Consider Community Outreach Event
- Plan networking or service events (Varies)
- Assist with tours and socials (4–8 hours)

### **Appendix C: Scientific Program Development**

The process of selecting a meeting theme (if desired), identifying plenary speakers, developing sessions, and soliciting and evaluating abstracts requires cooperation and coordination between several responsible groups.

#### Meeting Format

The meeting format is determined in collaboration between the SNA ED and the BOD as the format is highly dependent on logistical and financial considerations under their purview. The meeting format includes considerations such as the types of programs (on-demand, live, semi-live), the number of parallel sessions, the daily schedule (duration of the sessions, the number of presentations per session, the length of presentation), and if presentations are given live, semi-live, rerecorded or streamed, among other factors.

#### Meeting Theme

If desired by the program committee, a meeting theme can be used. The meeting theme is developed by the program committee chairs and approved by the BOD. Staff can provide a list of historical themes for annual meetings.

#### Plenary Speakers

The process of identifying plenary speakers is clarified in Appendix C1.

#### Meeting Tracks

Meetings tracks for SNA meeting are periodically reviewed by the BOD, who may solicit help from committees or ad hoc groups to ensure they meet the strategic direction of the society.

#### Sessions

Sessions, including Spotlight Sessions and Tribute Sessions, can be proposed by the membership at large. The scientific subcommittee of the program committee may develop sessions, especially Spotlight Sessions, Tribute Sessions, and/or alternate format sessions as they sometimes require a great deal of planning and experience. SETAC Science Committee can be helpful in providing thoughts and suggestions regarding to include cutting-edge topics for annual meeting sessions.

Sessions are solicited by the program committee via the first and final calls for session proposals, which are prepared and distributed by SNA staff. The Society's criteria for what constitutes an acceptable session must also be made known and emphasized. A deadline for receipt of session proposals is set by the SNA executive director and should be approximately 9



months in advance of the meeting. Staff will acknowledge the receipt of all session proposals.

The program committee together with SNA staff solicit potential chairs for sessions. The program committee should be advantageously positioned to solicit chairs for regional topics. Staff can assist by soliciting proposals from SETAC Interest Groups. Session organizers should review the Guidance for Session Chairs and Co-chairs (Appendix C5).

Staff will compile the sessions and distribute them to the scientific subcommittee. The scientific subcommittee will review the proposed sessions. The scientific subcommittee is responsible for ensuring the proposed sessions are representative of all scientific aspects of SETAC, and work to remedy gaps, if that is not the case. Where significant overlap is noted between sessions, the committee may ask staff to work with the individuals who proposed the sessions to either refine and distinguish their sessions or combine their sessions. These changes should happen within the first two weeks of the review period. Session chairs will be allowed two weeks to modify as appropriate. This is the time for the program committee in collaboration with staff to clarify any ambiguity regarding a session so that session chairs may continue efforts to develop their session with reasonable confidence that their session will be accepted at abstract review if they follow all procedures.

When session review is complete, SNA staff will notify session proposers of the results of this review. Communications should be unambiguous. In the event that decisions are not favorable or differ from the session chair preference, it is important to explain why the decisions were made.

### Abstracts

Abstracts are solicited by the proposed session organizers and chairs, and the program committee via the first and final calls for abstracts, which are prepared and distributed by SNA staff. A deadline for receipt of abstracts is set by the SNA executive director. Staff manages the abstracts database.

The scientific subcommittee reviews all abstracts and organizes the final technical program. Selection criteria have been established (see below) and should be used to justify acceptance or rejection of abstracts. As SNA matures, and the scope of our science expands, these selection criteria may be modified.

After the SNA annual meeting abstract review, the SNA staff will communicate with session chairs and the program committee to refine and complete the technical sessions and develop the final program. The scientific subcommittee must be available to provide input during the months prior to the meeting and be able to make timely decisions when questions and appeals pertaining to the program structure arise. Session chairs are expected to use their discretion in planning and structuring their sessions, but the program committee chair(s) make the final decisions when conflicts arise.

Calls for late abstracts may also be issued at the discretion of the SNA staff and the program

committee chair(s).

### **Guidelines for Selection of Abstracts**

- 1) Abstract must not promote a commercial product, process, or service
- 2) Abstract should be clear and well written
- 3) All authors and their affiliations should be listed on the abstract
- 4) All authors should comply with instructions and deadlines provided in the call for abstracts
- 5) The abstract should contain information or data that demonstrates that high-quality science will be presented
- 6) Information in the abstract should not have been previously published or presented, nor should it be repeated in a different session or submitted under multiple sessions
- 7) Subject matter should be applicable to the mission of SETAC

### **Guidelines for Organization of Sessions**

The scientific subcommittee is charged with developing the scientific program for the annual meeting. The scientific program is organized around the meeting format and daily schedule, which are determined by the BOD and staff well in advance of program development.

As described above, the scientific subcommittee will review the abstracts and organize the final scientific program. The subcommittee must decide during a limited time frame how to organize sessions into the program. To start, members of the subcommittee will be provided with a packet of abstracts to review. The session chairs' comments on abstracts will be also included in same package, if feasible, or provided in a later version if not. The packets are made up of abstracts for one or more related sessions, relevant to each reviewer's experience. It is highly preferable that related sessions are reviewed by same reviewer. Reviewers will be provided a spreadsheet listing the abstracts, which can be used for sorting and notation. The spreadsheet includes the track, session name and number, requested presentation type, abstract number, abstract title, author, author affiliation, student classification, and keywords. Reviewers are asked to read all assigned abstracts (typically 150–200) and provide feedback about those sessions. Each packet will be also reviewed by another reviewer at the face-to-face abstract review meeting.

The scientific subcommittee should delegate authority to the session chairs and provide oversight. Allow the session chairs to draw upon their expertise to select abstracts and order presentations. The subcommittee should ensure that the sessions reflect advances in the science and include a variety of perspectives. The scientific subcommittee needs to make every effort to ensure "balance" in sessions and to prevent overt efforts to use SETAC as a marketing or advocacy platform. The scientific subcommittee should communicate planned changes to session chairs, if feasible.

## **Appendix C1: Plenary Speakers**

Plenary Speakers are expected to be selected using a transparent selection criteria and process. The program committee or scientific subcommittee, under the leadership of the program chair(s), will develop a short list of potential plenary speakers, research and vet those candidates, and make final recommendations to the BOD to ensure that each meeting has a diverse suite of plenary speakers across a range of topics.

Process:

### **Select Individual Plenary Speakers Using '4R' Criteria**

We encourage the program committee to research nominees' backgrounds and work, and to contact candidates to answer questions pertaining to the 4Rs (below). Information about the nominees will be provided to SNA staff, who maintain a nominee database. The database tracks relevant information about nominees and informs whether they have been nominated for or spoken at previous annual meetings. The database is a useful resource and will be shared to help identify nominees that may fit better with other meeting themes. Every attempt should be made to provide detail about the nominee's background, work, and estimated speaking costs. Consult with the SNA staff for the plenary speaker budget.

The program committee should maintain open communication throughout the vetting and selection process. The committee should rank the nominees using the criteria listed below and combine each committee member's ranking into an overall score to make the final selections.

1. **Reliability of the speaker**
  - a. Is the speaker an expert in their field?
  - b. Is the speaker an effective communicator with a good track record?
  - c. Is the speaker eager to share their message(s) with the SETAC audience?
  - d. Does the speaker reflect SETAC values? Are they collaborative, science-based, tripartite, etc.?
  - e. Has the speaker ever violated the SETAC code of conduct?
  - f. Is the speaker willing and able to engage in additional ways at the meeting, for example, participate in a separate panel discussion, teach short course, etc.?
2. **Relevance of the speaker, topic, or talk**
  - a. Does the topic have a connection to the meeting theme?
  - b. Does the talk have a connection to the meeting geographic area?
  - c. Is the topic of high interest based on the meeting theme, current events, or the state of the science?
  - d. Does the proposed talk touch on an area of environmental science that would be at least tangentially relevant for attendees?
  - e. Does the proposed talk have a connection with accepted session proposals or topics?

3. Representation

- a. Does the speaker bring a fresh or novel perspective or include a non-traditional discipline?
- b. Is the speaker from an under-represented group?

4. Realism

- a. Is this affordable? If a selected speaker demands a high fee, a financial plan to support the speaker may be needed. Speak with the SNA ED.
- b. Is the speaker available?
- c. Are there any other considerations? Other considerations may include complicated travel logistics or technical challenges in the event of hybrid meetings.

Secure three plenary speakers for the full days of the conference. A keynote speaker may also be required at the opening ceremony. When possible, plenary speakers are encouraged to participate in other aspects of the meeting (e.g., offer professional training courses, participate in special symposia, etc.).

SNA staff will organize travel and booking logistics. A committee member will be asked to work with staff to facilitate the plenary speaker's participation in the annual meeting: meet them, introduce them, support their meeting participation, and ensure they feel welcome. For local plenary speakers, encourage the social committee to consider a field trip or other means to spotlight their work or ideas.

## **Appendix C2: Session Formats**

A Hybrid meeting can consist of on-demand sessions as well as live or semi-live sessions. Sessions consisting of a series of presentations are referred to as “traditional” format herein, while other styles are referred to as “alternative” formats.

### On demand sessions

On-demand sessions are typically traditional format in that they are a series of presentations – either videos or PDFs.

### Live Sessions

Live session can either follow a traditional or various alternative formats. Below are a few formats that could be considered for live sessions.

#### Platform Sessions

This session format is conducted in an assigned large meeting room with PowerPoint presentation, podium, screen, and projector.

##### *Traditional Platform Session*

Using this format, each presenter gives a scheduled oral presentation of a specified time using digital slides. A Q&A is scheduled at the end of each presentation. Presentations and Q&As in all concurrent sessions start and stop at the same time allowing attendees to move from one session to another during Q&A. Chairs monitor timing of speakers and moderate the Q&A.

If the session has an accompanying session (e.g., an on-demand session), attendees are encouraged to view associated presentations in the opening and closing slide before and after the session.

##### *Alternative Platform Session Formats*

Several alternative platform session formats are presented below for inspiration. Alternative platform sessions are more successfully organized well in advance of the meeting in full collaboration with, if not entirely by, the meeting program committee and SNA staff as they require additional preparation.

##### *SETAC Debate Session*

The session organizers carefully select 3 to 5 guests to debate a hot topic with assistance of a moderator (could be a session organizer). The session organizers ensure that various aspects or stances on the topic are represented to allow for a thorough debate. The guests come prepared to defend their stance while the moderator is prepared to keep the debate going by making pointed provocative statements. The moderator and debaters are expected to adhere to common courtesy and the SETAC code of conduct. Debate sessions lend themselves well to controversial topics.

### ***SETAC Panel Discussion Session***

Panel Discussions are a way to get more than one expert opinion on a topic in a short amount of time. The session organizers carefully select 3 to 5 guests to discuss a specific topic with assistance of a moderator (could be a session organizer). Panels are meant to be open and interactive and audience participation is highly encouraged. Panel discussions lend themselves well to discuss timely topics and new approaches.

### ***SETAC Storytelling Session***

Here the presentations are given as “stories.” The storytelling format is a good choice for sessions focused on case studies (e.g., session focused on green chemistry, LCA, remediation, restoration, ecosystem services, and sustainability).

### ***SETAC Campfire Session***

Campfire sessions are a cross between the storytelling sessions and panel discussions. A short story is told and followed with extensive discussion. The goal is to allow the attendees to generate the majority of the discussion and knowledge sharing. The storyteller becomes the facilitator. Attendees get to participate, learn, listen to multiple perspectives on the same issue, and share experiences with others. Campfire sessions could be a good format for case studies where the presenters identify several alternative or challenges and want input from the audience on solutions. This could be a good fit for session focused on development of methods, models, technologies, etc.

### ***SETAC Wave Session***

This is a rapid presentation style where speakers have a short amount of time to present a limited number of slides that have larger font size and a minimum number of words per slide. This presentation style allows speakers to give a big picture overview of a subject in a short amount of time thus providing “a wave” of information that quickly washes over the audience. For example, this format could suggest presentations follow a 6-12-24 rule (6 minutes, 12 slides, 24 font or words per slide) followed with 6 minutes of moderated discussion. Session organizers must work with presenters ahead of the meeting to insure they are interpreting requirements well and that the session will be a success.

### **Poster Sessions**

Poster sessions traditionally comprise a series of posters. With the advent of science communication methods, innovative poster formats are being used and encouraged at SETAC meetings.

### **Appendix C3: SETAC Spotlight Session**

Spotlight Sessions encompass a limited number of highlighted sessions at the annual meeting. The number of spotlight sessions is not fixed but restricting the number to a few will retain their eminence as meeting highlights. They are most successful when organized well in advance of the meeting and in collaboration with the technical subcommittee in full cooperation with SNA staff. Spotlight sessions typically meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Related to the central theme of the annual meeting or an important SETAC principle
- Related to a topic of regional importance (including utilizing regional speakers) to the location of the annual meeting
- Currently of high societal concern and/or links two or more topics or themes of high societal concern
- Contributes to SETAC long-range planning goals
- Stimulates transdisciplinary collaboration (potential collaboration with another society)

During session submission, submitters may request that their session be designated a Spotlight Session. They will be asked to provide a brief justification that includes 1) what makes the session unique (as it pertains to one or more of the criteria mentioned above), 2) whether all abstracts for platform presentations will be solicited (i.e., only invited speakers) or whether a call for abstracts will be opened, and 3) a list of speakers who will be invited, if applicable.

#### **Schedule for Proposing and Acceptance of Spotlight Sessions**

- Early February: Session proposal submitted that checks possible spotlight session box and includes a brief description of proposed session
- Early February (within a couple days of session submission closing): Scientific subcommittee makes an initial assessment of candidate spotlight sessions and requests detailed justification of planned session for those making the initial cut
- End February: Detailed justifications reviewed and conditionally approved spotlight sessions selected for inclusion in the call for abstracts
- Early June: Abstract submission closes
- Mid- to late-June: Scientific subcommittee meets for abstract review and evaluates proposed spotlight sessions to ensure they have complied with planned approach, and review abstracts to make a final decision about the session. Thus, it is possible that the session would not be held.

#### **Format of SETAC Spotlight Sessions**

Spotlight Sessions can be composed of invited speakers only or a combination of invited and speakers accepted based on solicited abstracts. They can utilize a variety of session formats (e.g., platform, poster, poster corner, panel discussion, and debates).

#### **Distinction Accorded to SETAC Spotlight Sessions**

Spotlight Sessions may be highlighted in the program with extended session descriptions, marketed distinctively, and recorded with permission. Spotlight Sessions confirmed during the abstract review will be assigned to specific rooms and time slots selected for high visibility.

#### **Appendix C4: Guidance for Sessions or Events Honoring an Individual or Group**

The scientific subcommittee may receive proposals for certain events designed to honor a person or a group because of accomplishments in a technical area. These events often take one of two basic formats:

1. A technical Tribute Session to honor an individual or group  
The scientific subcommittee will review the merits of the proposal in the same way as other session proposals:
  - Is the subject area appropriate for the meeting?
  - Are the proposed speakers of interest to the SETAC membership, etc. (see previous section “Guidelines for Selection of Abstracts”)?
  - Does the person or group being honored meet the criteria listed below?
  
2. Special events to honor an individual or group  
Special events are conducted in conjunction with an annual meeting, and can include lunches, dinners, receptions, dances, etc. Special events require greater investment of financial and human resources, and therefore are subject to BOD approval. Events can be proposed through the scientific subcommittee or SNA staff, and will be reviewed by the program committee chairs, the SNA ED, and the SNA BOD executive committee before being referred to the full BOD for approval. Complete justification and financial estimates must be compiled and presented to the executive committee sufficiently early to allow consideration and discussion of the proposal prior to final approval of the meeting program.

Persons or groups to be honored at an Annual Meeting with a dedicated technical Tribute Session or special event must meet the following criteria. The honoree must:

- be nominated by a SNA member through the scientific subcommittee or SNA staff, as described above;
- share the stated purpose of the Society; and,
- be recognized for service to SETAC and excellence in their profession.

#### **Appendix C5: Guidance for Session Chairs/co-Chairs**

Session chairs and co-chairs are an integral part of the SNA annual meeting. Indeed, without interested and engaged professionals suggesting exciting themes for discussion of new research, there would be no annual meeting.



This document provides guidance for the roles and responsibilities of session chairs and co-chairs and should be provided to session chairs to aid their organization and execution of their session.

### **Structure of Session Chairs and Co-Chairs**

Each session at a SNA annual meeting should have a session chair and co-chair. Multiple chair and co-chairs are not uncommon, e.g., three individuals each co-chairing a session. However, it should be noted that too many individuals chairing a session can be self-defeating, in that they can get in each other's way.

Session chairs or co-chairs should be knowledgeable in their session's area(s) of focus, which should conform with those of interest to SETAC (e.g., environmental chemistry, toxicology, science and policy for decision-making, etc.). Students are encouraged to co-chair sessions with more senior session chairs.

It is the responsibility of the session chair and co-chair(s) to ensure that they can attend the annual meeting and chair their sessions.

Chair and co-chair of sessions shall:

1. Submit session proposals for the annual meeting. The session proposal should consist of a title and a short description. A list of potential invited speakers may be included in the comments section, but NOT the body of the session proposal; a maximum of 70% invited speakers is allowed for a traditional session. If an alternative session format is requested, it should be clearly described in the comments section. If a Spotlight Session is being proposed, please consult Appendix C3.
2. Promote session by soliciting presentations for the session.
3. Select the abstracts and provide the order of presentation, subject to final approval by the scientific subcommittee.
4. Communicate with the potential speakers if questions arise concerning their abstract and presentation.
5. For in person sessions, prepare for the session by being present in the session room sufficiently ahead of the scheduled time of the session to ensure that:
  - a staff or volunteer is present to provide technical assistance as necessary
  - all necessary equipment is provided and in working order
  - all presenters are familiar with the equipment and facilities
  - no-shows are reported to SNA staff
6. Greet and interact with every session presenter and make them feel welcome.

7. Prepare questions to ask presenters in case no questions are asked immediately from the audience. It often takes a question or two to “wake up” the audience. This is especially important for student or young career professional speakers.
8. Chair the session, adhering to the published schedule of presentation times, limiting questions and debate in preference to the schedule, and ensuring presenters maintain appropriate, professional behavior (see subsequent section “Guidance to Session Chairs at SNA Annual Meetings”).
9. Respect the transition time between presentations to allow attendees to move into and out of the session room. Speakers should not be allowed to continue speaking into this period. However, discussion is encouraged, whether it is an extended question-and-answer session between the audience and the platform presenter, general discussion led by the Session Chair, or other appropriate material to use the transit periods effectively.
10. Promote an accompanying session if applicable by presenting associated poster ID numbers in opening and closing slide before and after the session.
11. If requested by scientific subcommittee, provide an introduction to the platform sessions in the first five minutes before the start of the session. The introduction could be used to give an overview of the session topic and advertise a relevant meeting, workshops, publications, interest group, poster session, etc.
12. Provide, as necessary, a short synopsis of the session and its highlights after the meeting, for use in SETAC Globe articles. These may be requested by the BOD or other groups.
13. For on-demand sessions, interact with presenters and make them feel welcome.

If discrepancies or problems are noted, the session chair(s) will report to the on-site SNA staff, who are responsible for rectifying the situation.

### **Guidance to Session Chairs at SNA Annual Meetings**

The role of Session Chairs in platform and interactive platform sessions at SNA annual meetings is important to the success of the sessions. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist you in chairing a session at annual meetings.

Appropriate, professional behavior is expected of every presenter, each of whom agreed to the following when they submitted their abstract:

“The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) is committed to ethical professional conduct. To ensure “Environmental Quality Through Science®,” SETAC meetings

serve as open forums for environmental professionals to present the findings of their scientific research. The opinions and ideas expressed are those of the individual, not of the Society.

By encouraging open discussion and exchange of ideas, SETAC meetings help bring the scientific weight-of-evidence to bear in answering environmental toxicology and chemistry questions. Only through support by data and peer-reviewed publications do scientific findings stand the test of time. Ultimately, these findings are accepted or rejected by an individual's peers, not by an organization like SETAC.

Presenters at all SETAC meetings worldwide are expected to be civil and to be professional in their words and actions. When you submit an abstract to SETAC, you agree to meet these expectations.”

The SNA BOD and the program committee will support your professional judgment in addressing any speaker who does not treat you, the audience members, or other presenters in a civil manner. You have the authority to remind a speaker that he or she agreed to a code of conduct, and to warn the speaker that their words or actions are out of line and unacceptable.

If a speaker persists in rude or unprofessional behavior, the session chair has the authority to turn off the projector and inform the audience that the presentation has ended because the speaker violated the code of conduct that they agreed to when they submitted their abstract.

Use your dignity and professionalism as session chair to maintain control of the session, and to make sure that other speakers have the opportunity to make their presentations. Venue security and the SNA executive director will provide assistance, in the unlikely event that you need it.

#### **Appendix D. Guidance for a Community Outreach Event**

A community engagement event should:

- Expand the reach of SNA meetings outside the halls of the convention center (literally and figuratively) to the local public
- Tap into the established audiences by collaborating with the local organizers of events like the March for Science and Café Scientifique, and Science Cafés
- Address the concerns of private citizens
- Establish a two-way conversation about SETAC science with the public
- Create public awareness of SETAC science and SETAC's tripartite structure and its benefits
- Enhance scientific literacy
- Focus on scientific topics of interest in that geographic region

Planning and conducting a community engagement event

All final decisions must be approved by the SNA staff and/or SNA BoD.

#### Stakeholders and advisors

SNA has several different committees and groups that may have advice or expertise for the social subcommittee as they plan their event. Local organizations may also have insight into the interest of the community. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Past, current, and future SNA program committees
- SETAC Board of Directors
- SNA staff – especially communication managers
- Science committee
- Local academics
- Local science event organizers, museums
- Local industry
- 

#### Develop the meeting topic and format

Consult with SETAC stakeholders and advisors listed above while developing an overall theme that is of global concern and broad in scope to maximize general interest, or several sub-topics of strong local public interest in which panelists or speakers will have expertise.

The event format is flexible and will be contingent on many factors, including support from local organizations, the event topic, and the number of participants expected. Some examples of appropriate formats include:

- Informal roundtable
- Panel with moderator
- Public lecture series
- Meet and greet
- Science fair
- Poster session
- Café or pub style science gathering
- Trivia or game show

#### Successful SETAC speakers, panelists, and moderators should

- Reflect the diversity of SETAC (sector, gender, geographic balance)
- Have a broad understanding of the regulatory and science landscape
- Be willing to help generate discussion and encourage questions from attendees and panelists
- Have a high-level of comfort discussing controversial issues
- Meet with SETAC leadership ahead of the event

### Tips for a successful event

- Keep introductions and overview brief
- Ensure any speaker keeps to strict timelines and addresses current, global (or regional) and high-level science. (Do not get into the weeds of the research)
- Solicit questions ahead of the meeting to encourage audience participation

### Timing during the annual meeting

We recommend that the event be held after normal business hours so that members of the public are available to attend. Because of this, AV support must be a consideration, and additional costs be approved by SNA Staff. It's also important to carefully consider potential overlapping SETAC events.

### Venue

The venue should be easily accessible by the public and they should feel comfortable in that space (e.g., library, school). Additionally, proximity to the annual meeting venue should be a consideration for SETAC members, as shuttle transportation would incur additional financial expense. The venue should hold the expected attendees.

### Publicity

**For the public:** As many forums as possible should be used to get the word out to the public as early as possible. It is suggested that the event is in coordination with a local group (such as a Science Café), and their mechanisms for advertisement would be primary. Newspaper, radio (NPR), and television (PBS) avenues should also be explored but could be cost prohibitive. These outlets should also be approached about broadcasting or writing about the event to reach a wider audience. Advertisement through venue mechanisms may also prove fruitful, particularly if a museum, government, or academic setting. Identify science teachers at local high schools and colleges and partner to encourage student attendance and collaboration (e.g., coverage by student reporters for science blogs or school newspapers). Any other existing connections within the community should also be considered to get the word out.

**For SETAC members:** SNA Staff will work with the subcommittee to promote the event internally, and the organizers should be prepared to help with messaging.