

HOW TO HOST AN INVITED SPEAKER

Heather Engelman and Diane Kuehn

Women in Scientific and Environmental Professions Speaker Series, SUNY-ESF
(revised 6/2010)

These instructions were written for the students in a seminar class in which they (in small groups) take turns hosting speakers in a public lecture series. They assume that there is an overall coordinator, who sets a slate of speakers and handles repetitive tasks, and hosts for each individual speaker, who tailor individual itineraries. In exchange for this service, the coordinator receives a prime spot on the itinerary for a “mentoring dinner” with the class run in conjunction with this series. Rather than use this time to talk “shop”, the class will ask speakers about their career paths, mentoring experiences, the evaluation system their employer uses, and how they have balanced work and family (and/or concurrent appointments) over the course of their careers.

Hosts are responsible for making sure that guest speakers’ visits run as smoothly as possible. We also want our speakers to enjoy their visit so that they remember our campus and us in a positive way. Much planning is needed to ensure these outcomes for each individual speaker.

Suggestions for Event Hosts:

- Assuming that a speaker’s participation (date, topic) has been confirmed well in advance of the lecture, start making detailed arrangements for your speaker at least 4 weeks prior to the event. Clearly delineate which individual will be responsible for each task. Do not leave this for the last minute!
- Try to keep your schedule for the day that your speaker is on campus as open as possible in case she requires assistance getting around campus, or to and from her hotel and the airport.
- Develop some familiarity with the AV equipment. Schedule a time with Instructional Technology Services (ITS) or ensure that someone that has can be present to help set up laptops, projectors etc. If things still go wrong, call ITS, and they will talk you through it.

Responsibilities of the Series Coordinator:

1. Make room reservations for each speaker’s presentation and a reception to follow.
2. Have any of the speakers have recently published a book?
 - a. Contact the Syracuse University Bookstore for help with a “Book Signing” early on so that they have time to locate and order books. They will assign a staffer to each event who will place the book order, bring the books to the event, handle sales (usually check and credit cards only; cash only if event will conclude during regular business hours), and return unsold books to the publisher.
 - b. Contact the Friends of Moon Library to see if they might co-sponsor the lecture by helping with the book signing and reception. If funds are not available, they might still help with the onsite logistics (setting and clearing tables is a huge help), particularly if a signed book can be presented to Moon Library.
3. Post these events on public calendars (see Checklist) and the series or department websites. Even if the details are incomplete, they should be up early to “save the date.” Amend the information as details are confirmed.
4. Send “save the date” email to CampusNews and StudentActivities, and perhaps targeted colleagues at nearby institutions with information about the event, and that the speaker will be available to meet with interested faculty and students date and period. Please contact hostname emailaddress if you are

interested in meeting privately, or with your class, lab group, or student organization. Please include your availability to meet.

5. Arrange hotel accommodations for speaker at the University Sheridan (most expensive, but best location), Genesee Grande or Park View Hotel (most budget friendly, but farthest away from campus so chauffeuring may be required) by faxing them a completed “Direct Bill” forms for each individual.
 - a. This form guarantees rooms with a pre-negotiated discounted rate, and tells the hotel whom to send an invoice after your speaker has checked out. Since funds are then paid directly to the hotel, it provides the cleanest paper trail.
 - b. If these are unavailable, you may need to guarantee a room on a personal credit card (unfortunately, procurement cards cannot be used for lodging). Make sure you get receipts so that you are reimbursed.
 - c. Is the speaker a federal employee? The hotel may have a further discounted rate.
 - d. An employer may not permit us to pay. You can still reserve and guarantee a room using the direct bill form; just note this restriction, and that charges will be settled with a personal credit card. The speaker will then settle the charges as per their employer’s instructions.
 - e. Speakers may opt to stay with local friends or family.
6. Arrange a location for each speaker’s dinner. We have faculty that take turns hosting our group around their dining room tables or living rooms. This provides an environment conducive for conversation and the sharing of life stories. We also learned during one of these sessions that a restaurant meal would have been a “gift” over the amount which speakers can accept; the lower cost of home cooked or takeout meals avoided this. If scheduling limits this session to lunchtime, it will be scheduled on campus.
7. Talk to the Office of Communications about a press release for the speaker series, particularly if all topics are confirmed in advance, or if there is a particularly well known or hot topic speaker.
8. Arrange for posters—have a template, so that individual are clearly identified as part of this series—if you lack the skills, the Office of Communications can help). Get this in a format that can be distributed electronically (i.e., small!) as well as printed (i.e., higher resolution). Also, put information in a text-only format, for distribution to the listservs and calendars, and encourage people to pass it on to anyone that might be interested.
9. At least three weeks before the presentation, send e-mail notices, both the pretty version and text-only versions (see Checklist).
10. For Baker Laboratory receptions:
 - a. Request a table in the lobby or in 408 Baker from Chris Langlois, Physical Plant. If there will be book signing in addition to this, you will need 2 additional tables (one for the selling, and the other for signing, books). You can send a single email with the dates and times for each event. Most other locations where a speaker might be, there are tables are already set up.
 - b. Locate and request permission to use cold rooms or refrigerators to chill food and drinks for receptions.
11. Obtain parking passes and maps for the speaker from University Police at least one week in advance (3 weeks in advance if it needs to be mailed).
12. Determine who is paying for which portion of the visit. Obtain a blank “Travel Voucher” to correspond to the sponsor reimbursing airfare or mileage (State, RF, CF, or USA/GSA account).

13. Prepare Welcome Packets for each speaker—see Checklist for general materials to orient every speaker to this campus, and the Speaker Series. Individualize the packets with the appropriate Travel Voucher, copies of posters, information about specific sponsors, and a final copy of her itinerary.

Responsibilities of the Host for Individual Speakers:

1. Copy all correspondence regarding your hosting to other co-hosts, and speaker coordinator, and let speaker and nominator know they should do the same. (If you are not doing this for credit, you might not need this level of communication—updates might suffice just fine!)
2. Talk with the speaker's nominator (usually speakers were nominated by a faculty or staff member at ESF). It's probably best to meet in person, but contacting by e-mail or phone is also fine.
 - Introduce yourself, and that you are helping to host Speaker in Speaker Series.
 - Explain that you'd like to make her visit as enriching as possible for her and ESF, and request suggestions about whom she might like to meet (in this and any department, including SU and UMU), which facilities she might like to tour, which students might like to spend some time with her, classes that could benefit from her visit, etc... What's the best way to let folks in this department know about her visit (e.g., fliers, e-mails, a word from the faculty chair)? Is there a listserv their department uses to let their students know what's happening? If so, with they forward the message on our behalf?
3. Introduce yourself to the speaker via e-mail.
 - Explain your role in her visit.
 - Request arrival and departure information. Speakers are making their own travel arrangements; flights into Syracuse will require you to arrange transport to, from, and during their stay (for very late night, or early morning flights—the Sheraton shuttle service is a great service). If speakers opt to fly into Albany, they will need to obtain a rental car. Provide this information to Speaker Coordinator ASAP so that she can submit the Direct Bill forms. You'll also need to arrange transport, and know which meals she will need.
 - Does she require any AV equipment? Should we have available a pointer, a laser pointer, overhead markers, a slide carousel, chalk, or just a cold bottle of water?
 - Is there anyone in particular she would like to visit with while here? Has she ever been to SU or ESF (if not and time permits, a campus tour would be a nice addition). Would she like private prep time before her presentation? Will she need to check in with the office by phone or e-mail?
 - Remind her about the group dinner (depending on who made initial contact with her, she may have little knowledge of this aspect), and ask if she has any dietary restrictions or preferences (some alumnae have fond, or horrible, memories of local eateries). Share this information with the individuals taking her out for other meals and the host for the speaker's dinner.
4. Make arrangements for airport pick up of the speaker. Send the speaker contact information in case of delays. Use flight information to check for delays.
5. Start preparing an itinerary for the speaker (this is often the most difficult task). Here's an example:

Tuesday

10:00 am	Speaker arrives at Syracuse Hancock Airport. Host to pick up, drive to ESF (and give Welcome Packet)
11:00	Meeting with faculty member #1.
12:00 pm	Lunch with faculty member #2, students, or other group
1:30	Meeting with student A
2:30	Tour of campus
3:00	Speaker prep time in 146 Baker
4:00	Speaker presentation

5:00 Speaker reception in lobby of Baker Lab
 6:00 Meet at dinner location; have dinner with seminar class
 8:30 Drive speaker to hotel

Wednesday

7:00 am Speaker departs hotel via hotel shuttle to airport or breakfast with Student B, who will drive to airport

Considerations for setting up the itinerary:

- The host should contact the speaker's nominator to brainstorm the names of potential individuals who would benefit from meeting with the speaker.
 - Contact whoever the nominator suggests might be interested in meeting with the speaker—especially those individuals that have not yet responded to the Coordinator's blanket inquiry. Introduce yourself; explain who the speaker is, what she will be speaking about, and when she will be speaking. Also, identify any free times available on the speaker's itinerary for meetings.
 - Depending on the length of stay, meals are a wonderful opportunity for faculty and students to meet and greet the speaker. Ask folks if they'd like to take her to breakfast or lunch (we may be able to reimburse for this, especially for students, as long as there was no alcohol, and the payer submits an original receipt and list of participants).
 - Once you've received information from people who'd like to meet with the speaker, set meeting times and send a draft itinerary. Arrange with individuals to escort between meetings; this isn't always necessary, but for cross campuses is particularly helpful. For time management, it may be helpful to schedule a few back to back meetings in the same room, but allow for some leg stretching. Tips from previous hosts: *Do not schedule a meeting with a long-winded faculty member right before the speaker's presentation!* And, for winter speakers—avoid early critical or otherwise inflexible sessions, just in case flights are delayed.
 - Keep in contact as you flesh out the schedule so we know if you are having difficulty contacting people, arranging visits, etc. -- we may have to talk with the nominator for further guidance.
 - Share the penultimate itinerary with classmates. Ask if anyone would like a meeting with the speaker.
 - Share the itinerary with the nominator. Find out if the nominator would like to introduce the speaker for her presentation. If the nominator says "no," the coordinator will do so.
6. Three weeks before the speaker's visit, confirm reception and dinner budgets, and plan (see notes).
 7. One week before the speaker's visit, confirm all arrangements with the speaker, and send a copy of the itinerary. If she is driving, make sure she has directions and a campus map.
 8. During the speaker's visit, make sure the speaker is picked up from and delivered to the airport. If you are unable to do this, find someone who can. Periodically check in with the speaker to make sure that everything is going smoothly. Take notes during the lecture so that you can write a press release.
 9. After the speaker's visit:
 - Write a thank you letter to the speaker (see attached sample), and print on college letterhead..
 - If anyone went above and beyond in any part of the visit (for instance, if the dinner hosts cooked for a whole group of students that they had not previously met), write them a thank you note, too
 - Write a press release about the speaker's presentation (see attached sample). Send it to the Speaker Coordinator via e-mail so that she can forward to the Knothole and sponsors.
 - These should be done within a week of the speaker's presentation.

The reception:

- The coordinator will reserve space for the reception, but host or designee will arrange food and drink.
 - Campus Catering offers reliable, affordable "On the Go" fruit, veggie, and cheese/crackers platters. Cookies/brownies are also available, as well as breakfasty-things. Orders should be placed *at least* 48 hours prior to the event. Platters come with napkins, plates, toothpicks, tongs;

breakfast items and sweets do not, but they will bundle some for a small fee. They only serve campus units, with payment by PO. They will send an invoice after the event; attach to a PO for processing.

- Check supply bin for cups, or any serving items that will not be provided.
- Some sponsors have a procurement card that can be used for purchasing reception items. Make sure you use a tax exempt form and return the receipt & card to whom it was obtained.
- For other purchases, use a tax exempt form, and submit receipts for reimbursement (keep a copy)
- Drinks. We set out a water pitcher, and an assortment of family sized juice bottles for self-service. Soda is not popular. To serve wine or beer at receptions:
 - Submit request to the Office of Student Affairs two weeks in advance, identifying proofing system, and identifying servers. Lots of work, few partake, so we rarely plan for alcohol.
- Trays and drinks should be stored safely (in terms of temperature, and to protect from pilfering) until just prior to the reception, and then guarded until the reception begins.

The Mentoring Dinner or lunch:

- Keep track of your receipts!
- Ask class members, the speaker, and any other invited guests (we limit to those familiar with the seminar objectives—past participants or organizers in closely related fields) if they have any food allergies or constraints. Plan the meal assuming that someone is vegetarian.
- The meal can either be home-cooked or catered. Some ideas from past dinners include chili, vegetarian lasagna, make-your-own burritos (the ingredients were purchased at Alto Cinco), gourmet pizzas, etc... Side dishes such as bread and/or salad have also been included.
 - For daytime events with 10 or more participants and 48 hours notice, the Brooklyn Pickle “Office Special” includes sandwiches (turkey, roast beef, ham & cheese—vegetarian available on request), 2 family style salads, chips, and a brownie/cookie assortment for ~\$7/person. They deliver (\$8), and will bring an invoice for the tax exempt sale.
 - King David’s on Marshall Street offers several “Office Express Menus” that serve 15-20 or 30-40, with prices starting at \$140. They deliver and will bring an invoice for the tax exempt sale.
 - Mimi’s café does upscale sandwiches and sides, with prices starting at \$10.25/person.
- Dessert is always popular!

SAMPLE SPEAKER THANK YOU LETTER

February 10, 2010

Speaker's name
Mailing Address

Dear Dr./Ms. _____,

The students and instructors of the Women in Science and Environmental Professions seminar would like to thank you for your seminar entitled "*Estrogen Mimics and Sex Education for Fishes.*" It was very informative with regard to both content and research practices. We were also impressed with your preparation and professionalism as evidenced by the presentation of such a clear talk just minutes after your weather-delayed arrival. We are pleased that even with the travel difficulties you had the opportunity to tour some of the many lab facilities here at ESF and speak with a number of students and faculty.

We would also like to thank you for meeting with us as a group for dinner after your presentation. Your openness in sharing your philosophies and the path your career has followed was greatly appreciated; the interest you expressed in our research across various environmental fields was also well received. The discussion of choices we all make as women professionals in science helped to shine further light on some of those issues.

It was obvious that you love what you do; we were delighted that you could take time away to share it with us.

Sincerely,

Student host's name
Graduate Student

Student host's name
Undergraduate Student

Student host's name
Graduate Student

Diane Kuehn
Associate Professor

Sharon Moran
Assistant Professor

Heather Engelman
Instructor

As a course requirement, students share responsibility for reporting on lectures in this speaker series. Summaries are sent to the College's weekly newspaper, sponsors, and others on request.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

"Swackhammer Speaks on Estrogen Mimics and Sex Education for Fishes"

Press release title

By _____

Your name(s)

Dr. Deborah L. Swackhamer, Professor of Environmental Chemistry in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota, presented her research on *Estrogen Mimics and Sex Education for Fishes* at ESF on Tuesday, January 27, 2004 to launch SUNY ESF's Women in Scientific and Environmental Professions Spring Seminar Series. The Departments of Chemistry and Environmental and Forest Biology, the Graduate Student Association, and the ESF Women's Caucus jointly sponsored the seminar.

The introduction should contain speaker's name, date of presentation, presentation title, seminar series name, and sponsor.

Dr. Swackhamer discussed a variety of endocrine disrupting compounds in the environment (also called EDCs) that mimic endogenous hormones. Examples include synthetic hormones, organohalogenes, pesticides, detergent components, and plasticizers. These compounds bind to estrogen receptors in organisms. The effects of these compounds on organisms and the levels of exposure required to cause effects are still widely unknown.

Summary of presentation.

Attention was first focused on EDCs through observations of their effects in the field. Colonial nesting birds around the Great Lakes have been greatly affected by DDT (through eggshell thinning) as well as PCBs and dioxins, which cause developmental deformities resulting in early death. Nearly 50% of the beluga whales in the St. Lawrence River exhibit hermaphroditic characteristics thought to be caused by organochlorine exposure. These and similar cases led Congress in 1998 to enact regulations requiring the screening of all commercially available chemicals for endocrine disrupting ability. This screening has been delayed to date by the lack of validated assays.

Within Dr. Swackhamer's research group, studies have been conducted to determine the effects of EDCs on walleye and carp. They have found that wild fish captured during the spawning season in the discharge channel from a sewage treatment plant exhibit high levels of estradiol, low testosterone levels, smaller gonads than reference fish, and a lack of milt. However, a controlled laboratory study exposing fish directly to the effluent from the treatment plant produced no reduction in sperm quantity or quality but did indicate a behavioral failure to compete for females during spawning. Current and future research is focused on the identification of an appropriate indicator compound that could be used in the field to identify populations affected by EDCs.

Dr. Swackhamer received her B.A. in Chemistry from Grinnell College, and her M.S. in Water Chemistry and Ph.D. in Oceanography and Limnology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She serves as co-director of the Water Resources Center at the University of Minnesota. She sits on the Science Advisory Board of the International Joint Commission of the U.S. and Canada, and serves on the Advisory Board for the National Undersea Research Program of NOAA for the North Atlantic-Great Lakes Region.

Speaker's background is included near the end.

For upcoming events (or more information about) in the Women in Scientific and Environmental Professions Speaker Series, please visit <http://www.esf.edu/womenscaucus>.

Finish with "For more information....."

###

