

## Getting the Most out of the ASCB Annual Meeting

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The 50th ASCB Annual Meeting promises to be an historic event. To make the most out of this meeting it is important that participants, particularly newcomers, formulate a plan. There are many approaches that work, and the key is to find what works for you. The Women in Cell Biology (WICB) Committee would like to offer some strategies for making the most out of this event to prevent attendees from becoming overwhelmed: 1) Plan Ahead, 2) Take Copious Notes, 3) Network, 4) Visit the Exhibits, and 5) Follow up.

### Plan Ahead—But Be Flexible

First and foremost, plan ahead. Review the *ASCB Annual Meeting Program* and highlight the talks/events that are of interest. Plan to attend the major talks such as the Keynote Symposium, the Keith Porter Lecture, and the E.B. Wilson Medalists' talks. Although it is time-consuming, we highly recommend that you carefully go through the abstracts and make a list of all the posters and Minisymposia talks that are related to your area or seem interesting. Also, don't forget to take a look at the late-breaking abstracts. There just might be an abstract that catches your attention.

Make yourself a schedule that allows you to see and hear the presentations that are most important to you. The ASCB Itinerary Builder lets you do this online, and you can print out your schedule. This will be available approximately four weeks before the meeting. Remember: You cannot do it all. Set some clear priorities, but do not fill all of your time. Leave room to be flexible.

When putting together your personal schedule for the meeting, take a close look at the special offerings. The ASCB offers workshops and special talks sponsored by the Education, Minorities Affairs, Public Policy, and WICB Committees. (Some of these events require preregistration.) What are your career goals? Are any of these events of special value to you? Of particular note is the WICB-sponsored Career

Discussion & Mentoring Roundtables, which offer an opportunity for informal discussion of topics of interest while providing an excellent opportunity for networking. If possible, plan to arrive early enough on Saturday so that you will have time to attend the Member-Organized Special Interest Subgroup sessions.

### Nota Bene

Take copious notes. The volume of information that you will encounter in the few days of this meeting is phenomenal. Plan to share what you've learned with the folks back home. Carry a notebook with you at all times. Jot down names and snippets of conversations as well as notes from talks and posters. Keep an action list of things that you want to follow up on after the meeting: papers to look up, people to write to, and experiments to do.

### Network

Science is not conducted in a vacuum; therefore, it is important that you network with other scientists in your field. The ASCB Annual Meeting is a great place to make these connections. Especially valuable are the connections that you make with your peers. Hang out at the poster sessions. Talk to people about their work. Be flexible: That Minisymposium talk that you were planning to attend would be good, but so is the conversation you are having with a new contact. Maybe you can set up a time to meet the person again later? Or maybe this is a rare opportunity and you can find a way to learn later what you missed in the talk. Speaking of Minisymposia, be sure to introduce yourself to the speakers at the end of the sessions.

Additionally, if there is someone in particular whom you would like to meet, be proactive and invite the individual to your poster. Program officers from the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation frequently attend, and participate in, the Annual Meeting. This would be an excellent opportunity to have an informal chat about future funding. Use the breaks wisely; graduate students and postdocs may benefit from visiting the Career Center and the Educational Resources/Minorities Affairs Committee Booth.



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Be brave, try not to worry about rejection, and don't wait for introductions. Even if this is your first meeting, take every opportunity to make yourself visible and interact with others. Most people are approachable and would welcome the chance to discuss science. The social events are great for networking. Take advantage of the relaxed atmosphere to introduce yourself to the “rock stars” of cell biology. At the 50th Anniversary Reception following the Keynote, you can meet special guests—Nobel laureates, past awardees, and past ASCB leaders as well as current ones.

### See the Latest Gizmos and Enjoy Gadgets

Make time to visit the exhibits, where you can see the latest gizmos and gadgets. You will find valuable technical information, brochures and books, and free samples. If you've been having technical difficulties with equipment or reagents, enjoy the luxury of talking face-to-face with a technical representative. Get your questions answered. And the Exhibitor Showcases and Tutorials scheduled at various times during the meeting provide in-depth technical information.

**Be brave, explore an area outside of your research, make new friends, and have fun.**

### Follow Up

When you return home, follow up on all the connections that you made. Remember to send that request for reagents. Thank the senior scientists who took the time to stop by your poster. Take up a colleague on his or her offer to review your manuscript. It's important to keep in touch with the scientists you encounter at the meeting. You never know when or how your paths will cross again.

Finally, and truly the most important bit of advice that we can offer is to relax and enjoy yourself. After all, you are at this meeting because you know how fascinating cell biology can be. Here you are with a stunning opportunity to learn about some of the most exciting

stuff happening in one of the coolest of all human endeavors. Don't cheat yourself of the opportunity to enjoy it thoroughly. Be brave, explore an area outside of your research, make new friends, and have fun. We look forward to seeing you in Philadelphia! ■

—Lynne Quarmby, on behalf of the Women in Cell Biology Committee, with 2010 updates by Triscia Hendrickson, W. James Nelson, and Negest Williams

## International Research & Training Exchange Fair at ASCB's 50th Annual Meeting

Brand new this year, the International Research & Training Exchange Fair will be held Saturday, December 11, after the Keynote, during the 50th Anniversary Reception. The fair is sponsored by the International Affairs Committee (IAC) to:

- Inform attendees about IAC activities
- Provide information about research, training, and other opportunities in countries around the world
- Encourage students and postdocs to think about educational and training opportunities in other countries
- Open up collaborative exchanges between labs in various countries

Tables will be set up displaying information from various regions and institutions around the world. Representatives will be available to answer questions. For more information or questions, contact Exchange Fair Coordinator Vivek Malhotra at [vivek.malhotra@crg.es](mailto:vivek.malhotra@crg.es) or Cheryl Lehr at [clehr@ascb.org](mailto:clehr@ascb.org). Make sure to check out the fair while you enjoy refreshments and collegiality during the ASCB's 50th Anniversary Reception in Philadelphia! ■

—Cheryl Lehr