

# Guidelines for Chairing a Feedback Session

The purpose of feedback sessions is to provide authors with the context and direction they need to improve the quality of their work. Preparation is key, and the success of the session is dependent on your work reviewing material.

First and foremost, you will be the only presenter. You should read out loud the title and authors for each presentation (a slide to show this can be used), and provide a synopsis of the work. This could be done by reading the abstract, or by writing up something of your own as you feel is appropriate. Once you have done this you should strive to identify the key potential contributions contained in the work. This might require some extrapolation on your part but can serve as a positive basis for encouraging further work. Additional positive comments are also welcome.

Once you have provided context for the work going over ways in which it needs to be improved in order to bring it up to publishable (or presentable) form should be presented. For application work outlining the material shown versus a sequence of identifying the problem, gathering reference modes, creating a dynamic hypothesis, building out a model and getting interesting policy conclusions can be used. For all types of papers the structure of presentation and the ability to get at useful results can be commented on.

Feedback sessions can also serve as a basis for bringing together different people working in similar areas (as work in progress sessions do) and for instilling methodological information not only on the authors, but on the rest of the audience. Jay used to say that the most informative things to hear about a project were those that went wrong, and in that spirit discussing deficiencies can provide a pretty general learning opportunity.

## **Before the conference:**

1. Read each of the submission in your session. These may be papers or simply extended abstracts. They will be emailed to you.
2. Prepare a presentation that goes over the papers and also sets more general context. There is a set of slides authored by John Sterman that can be used in these sessions if you choose.

## **Before the session starts:**

1. Arrive at the session at least 5 minutes before the session starts.
2. There is no protocol for introducing or acknowledging authors. Use your judgement on what will make them feel more comfortable and welcome.

## **During the session:**

1. For each paper show the title and authors. You can ask the authors to stand up and be recognized, or not, as you see fit. No standard protocol yet exists for these sessions.
2. You are in charge of time. You can present each paper relatively quickly and move to general discussion or intermix discussion and the papers throughout the presentation.
3. Be prepared to resolve logistic problems with the help of the room supervisor.
4. It is not a big problem to end early, but if you get through your discussion points early than going over the slides provided (or a variation of them) is likely something that will be useful for many in the audience.

Please find further suggestions in this short but informative article on chairing a session:  
<http://www.ploscompbiol.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pcbi.1000517>