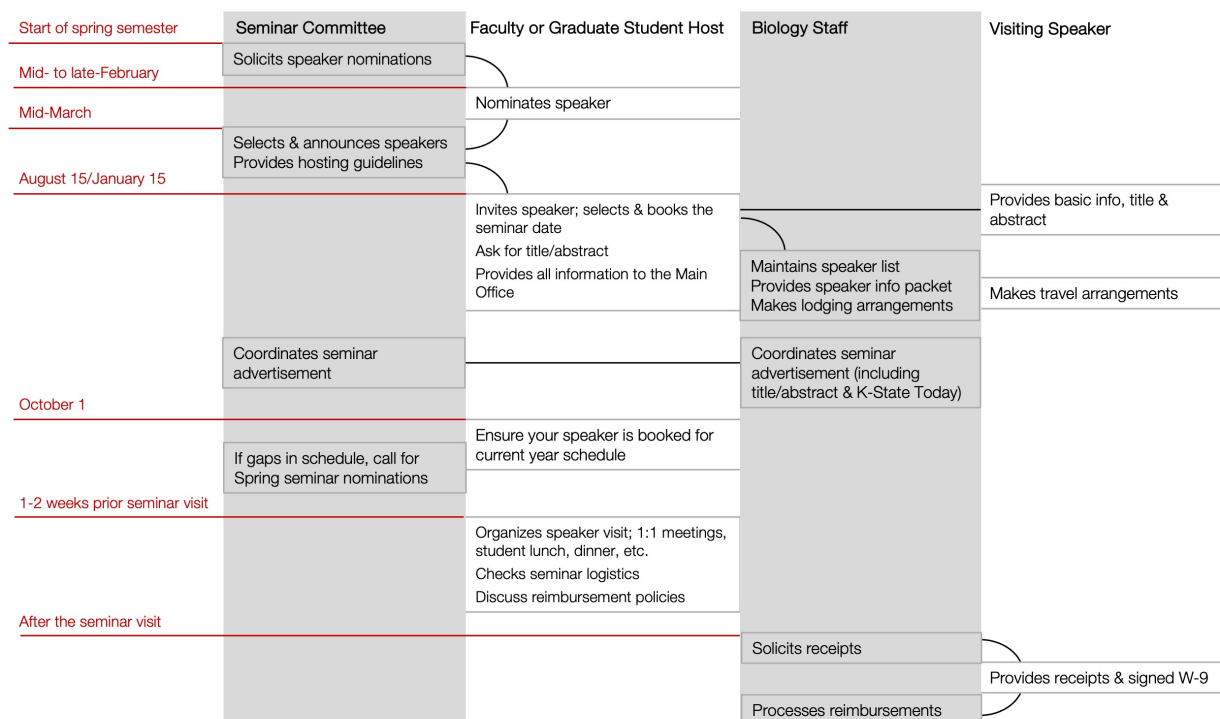


# Guidelines for Hosting a Visiting Speaker for the Departmental Seminar Series in the Division of Biology

Revised: October 2023

This document outlines the general policies and procedures for hosting a visiting speaker for the departmental seminar series in the Division of Biology. The flow chart summarizes the overall process, highlights the general responsibilities of the different entities involved, and indicates critical deadlines.



## 1. Speaker Nomination and Selection Process

The seminar committee solicits nominations early in the spring semester and meets mid-February to evaluate and select speakers for the next academic year. Additional nominations may be solicited in the fall semester if the spring schedule still has open seminar slots. If you have a fast-moving chance to invite an international or high-profile speaker who will be in the area, the seminar committee will also consider applications that are submitted at other times.

When nominating speakers, we ask you to consider the following things:

- We value scientific, cultural, and gender diversity in our seminar program. That said, the committee can only approve speakers that are actually nominated. Try to put forward seminar speakers who are not only great scientists, but also contribute to the breadth and diversity of our seminar series. Please take the time to justify why your speaker will benefit the seminar series and the division, which greatly facilitates the selection process.

- We generally approve speakers that cost us less to support. So, we appreciate faculty members hosting colleagues from nearby institutions to fill gaps in our seminar program.
- We generally have some extra funds for very high-profile speakers. If you feel your speaker has a very high profile (Nobel laureate, member of NAS, HHMI, etc.), please justify why they should be considered in this category.
- We regularly receive more nominations of excellent speakers than we can accommodate financially. Please leverage alternative and complementary sources of funding whenever possible, so we can arrange for cost-sharing with Biology and respond to announcements for sponsored lectureships and supplementary funding streams (e.g., Distinguished Lecture Series, Diversity Lecture Series, KAWSE). Requests for proposals for these programs are announced in K-State Today.
- Speakers in the departmental seminar series are usually faculty or research scientists with institutional appointments. If you would like to invite a speaker who is a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow, you might consider the other seminar series in the department, such as the MCDB Research Seminar Forum or the EEB seminar series.
- Virtual visits: A virtual visit may be requested. This may be ideal for international speakers or others who may be unable to come for a full on-campus visit.
- You may explore the speaker's interest in visiting before or after submitting a nomination to the seminar committee.

The seminar committee evaluates and selects speakers based on the following guidelines. Note that four speakers each year are typically selected by the graduate students. Seminar slots early in the fall semester (August and September) are often reserved for tenure, promotion, and those early in the spring semester (January/February) for job candidates.

- We prioritize equal representation of speakers that align with different sections in Biology.
- Speaker ranking is positively impacted by the following factors (in no particular order):
  - Speaker profile (we try to prioritize leaders in their field)
  - Interdisciplinarity (we try to prioritize speakers that integrate across the disciplinary diversity in the division)
  - Support (we try to prioritize speakers that have been endorsed by multiple faculty members)
  - Diversity (we try to prioritize speakers that add cultural and gender diversity to our seminar series)
  - Cost (we can only approve four full cost speakers, so low-cost speakers from nearby institutions and virtual speakers have a higher chance of being approved; we prioritize high-cost speakers when there are avenues for cost sharing)
  - Faculty host rank (we try to prioritize speakers that support development of tenure-track Assistant Professors)

Upon deliberation, approved seminar speakers are announced to the division's faculty, including an accounting of nominated speakers. This typically occurs at the end of the spring semester (and in October if needed). Faculty hosts that were approved to invite a speaker must follow the guidelines below to organize the visit.

## **2. Arranging a Seminar Date**

Once you receive approval from the seminar committee, please book your speaker for one of the regular seminar slots on Monday afternoon. Note that we do not typically allot funding for speakers that are unable to speak during the established seminar time. As needed, sign up for a virtual slot or an in-person visit slot.

Each semester, slots are assigned on a first come-first serve basis and are handled by Sara Smith ([ssara@ksu.edu](mailto:ssara@ksu.edu)) in the main office. First check [the planning calendar for available times](#) and then ask your speaker to send you their first and alternative choices based on the available dates. If you have problems viewing the calendar or have any questions, call the main office.

When you agree on a date with your speaker, immediately contact Sara Smith ([ssara@ksu.edu](mailto:ssara@ksu.edu)) to add the speaker to the departmental schedule (other people will be trying to schedule concurrently, so locking in the date immediately after confirmation is important). In addition to the seminar date, you will have to provide the following information, which is necessary for communication with your speaker prior to their visit and for reimbursement after their visit:

- Full name of the speaker
- Speaker's email and preferred phone number
- Speaker's institutional affiliation and postal address
- A tentative title, abstract, and picture (see below). This minimizes the number of communications required by all parties.
- Optionally, speakers are encouraged to provide a URL to their website and their Twitter handle
- Information of potential cost sharing with other programs

Once all information is received, Sara Smith ([ssara@ksu.edu](mailto:ssara@ksu.edu)) will provide the invited speaker with a document package with information about the division, travel, and accommodations, as well as reimbursement.

## **3. Title, Abstract, Picture, and K-State Today Announcement**

To properly advertise seminar events, we need a seminar title and abstract prior to the start of the semester. We require that you solicit a tentative title and abstract when you confirm your speaker's date. If necessary, the title and abstract may be updated at a later stage. In addition, the host needs to provide a short seminar announcement for K- State Today, briefly introducing the speaker and the seminar topic. Staff will add details about time and location and submit the announcement for release.

Please note that abstracts should be non-technical and addressed to students and researchers in the life sciences that may not have expertise in the immediate area of the speaker. We also encourage speakers to provide a picture (a portrait or a picture representative of their research), and – if available – a link to their website and social media presence (e.g., Twitter handle).

#### **4. In-Person Visit: Making Travel Arrangements**

KSU policy requires that speakers make their own travel arrangements and then submit receipts for reimbursement. Request for your speaker to book and pay for their own travel to KSU. Advise your speaker that they should save receipts for all expenses including flights, boarding passes, mileage for personal vehicles, highway tolls, airport parking, and meals in transit. Receipts for meals should be itemized, otherwise the costs will be included in the honorarium, which may be taxed. Alcohol expenses cannot be reimbursed.

Flights directly into MHK (Manhattan) often cost the same as flying through Kansas City (MCI) and renting a car or taking the shuttle. Current schedules include several direct flights a day to and from Dallas and Chicago on American Airlines. These flights are often full and should be booked early.

Ground travel from Kansas City can be arranged by driving over to pick up your speaker, by booking a ride on the KCI Roadrunner Shuttle Service (\$80 each way, <https://arivalshuttle.com/>), or by asking your speaker to rent a car and drive to Manhattan.

Speakers are welcome to drive directly to KSU if they are at a nearby institution. Reimbursement for mileage with a personal vehicle must be less than or equal to a comparable plane ticket. Driving instructions to reach campus are posted on the Division of Biology website. The Division has a parking pass that may be used for the reserved slot immediately adjacent to the stairs in the parking lot south of Ackert Hall. Contact the Biology main office to reserve and pick up a parking pass.

#### **5. In-Person Visit: Making Lodging Arrangements**

The Division of Biology regularly houses visiting speakers at the Bluemont Hotel or the Holiday Inn. Cost for the room can be billed directly to Biology, and Sara Smith ([ssara@ksu.edu](mailto:ssara@ksu.edu)) typically arranges hotel reservations. Please make sure to communicate with her, if there is anything she needs to know about arranging accommodations, including arrival and departure dates.

Note that lodging in the guest housing at Konza Prairie Biological Station (KPBS) is available and can be booked with Barb Van Slyke (785-587-0441). This is an inexpensive option but requires a 20-minute drive to Konza Prairie. Bedding is provided, but meals are not included in the housing at Konza Prairie. On football weekends, sometimes the guest housing at Konza Prairie may be the only option for lodging.

If the speaker is a friend, you are welcome to invite them to stay with you in your home. Cost savings will help the seminar budget for the semester.

#### **6. Virtual Visit**

Follow the same procedure to schedule speakers delivering their seminar on Zoom, without worrying about travel or lodging arrangements. Virtual speakers will receive the same honorarium as in-person speakers, in value of their time and expertise.

## 7. Plan the Visit

Faculty hosts are expected to organize activities during the speakers visit. That said, hosts have great flexibility in planning the schedule. We encourage hosts to organize a schedule with the following components (a sample schedule can be found in the appendix of this document):

- Half-hour to 45-minute slots that allow for personal interactions between the speaker and members of the department. Faculty usually meet one-on-one; postdocs and graduate students may prefer the social comfort of a small group. As schedules allow for virtual visits, we encourage scheduling several faculty meetings that day or the following.
- Monday lunch with graduate students (solicit broad participation by sending a message through the graduate student listserv and individual emails to students you think may be interested in meeting with the speaker).
- Other meals may be organized with or without other members of the department.
- We recommend leaving the half hour before the seminar (3:30 to 4:00) free, so that the speaker can take some time to prepare as needed. For virtual visits, be sure to log on to the Zoom link early to help the speaker set up their screen and to confirm they have a stable internet connection.
- If time permits, speakers may want to visit Konza Prairie, which is a beautiful natural preserve and an important facility in Biology. To visit, contact one of the Konza-affiliated faculty or graduate students. Remember that for KPBS record keeping, all visits should be recorded by a valid permit, even if filed after the fact. KPBS affiliated faculty and graduate students are familiar with the request processing.

To ensure broad participation, we encourage hosts to share a doodle poll with faculty, postdocs, and graduate students in the division. *Ask speakers who they would like to meet with and reach out to those individuals.* Also, if you think some division members might be interested in interacting with the speaker, initiate a potential meeting through a personal message. This approach has proven very effective to ensure broad participation. Finally, when coordinating a speaker's schedule, it is helpful to arrange blocks of appointments that are physically close, especially if faculty are in different buildings. Communicate clearly how you expect transitions between meetings to work to avoid unnecessary delays.

## 8. Seminar Logistics

The usual seminar room is Ackert 221. If a large audience is expected, it is also possible to use the larger lecture hall in Ackert 120. Note that the latter room needs to be reserved early through the university room reservation system.

The media facilities in the seminar rooms are flexible, and it is possible to load talks on a USB stick or connect a personal laptop computer (PC or Mac) through HDMI or VGA. If speakers are not using their own computer, we advise them to embed their PowerPoint fonts. If they are using their own computer, we encourage speakers to provide the necessary adapters to connect to VGA or HDMI output. If there are any questions, please make sure to contact Bob LeHew ([rlehew@ksu.edu](mailto:rlehew@ksu.edu)) well in advance of the seminar. A laser pointer and bottled water are available in the main office for the speakers.

Virtual visits will be scheduled via Zoom.

## 9. Entertainment Expenses

Hosts are given an allowance of \$225 total per speaker for entertainment expenses, such as taking the speaker out for dinner with a small group of colleagues or students. This limit includes lunches with graduate students. We encourage hosts to prioritize entertainment expenses for graduate student lunches to provide opportunities to our trainees.

*\*\*\*Graduate student invited speakers only (3-4 per year): you may receive up to \$50 alcohol reimbursement for dinner. Ask for the alcohol on a separate receipt for reimbursement.\*\*\**

For meal reimbursements, please provide your entertainment receipts to Whitney Finto ([finto@ksu.edu](mailto:finto@ksu.edu)). Meal receipts must have an itemized list of expenses and must include a list of names of the people who attended each function. You may not claim any reimbursement for alcoholic beverages. Hence, we recommend getting separate itemized receipts for food and alcohol items. If charges for food and alcohol are together on a receipt, the reimbursement processing may be delayed.

## 10. Reimbursement

We encourage hosts to make sure speakers understand the reimbursement policies and procedures. You may want to allocate some time to visit with Whitney Finto to clarify potential questions.

The critical points include the following (these will have been communicated to the speaker prior to the visit already):

- Speakers should provide itemized receipts (ones that show exactly what they consumed) for any meals purchased during their travel or visit. Note that the Division of Biology cannot reimburse alcohol or non-itemized receipts. Receipts can be submitted through the host or directly to Whitney Finto ([finto@ksu.edu](mailto:finto@ksu.edu)).
- If the speaker submits an airline ticket or rental car receipt, it must be the copy that shows the last 4 numbers of the credit card charged. The total amount charged to the credit card must also be shown on the receipt. If what is submitted does not show this information, the expense cannot be reimbursed.
- The speaker needs to sign the front of all receipts in non-black ink prior to submission.
- The speaker must provide a completed W-9 form, home address, and social security number to Whitney Finto ([finto@ksu.edu](mailto:finto@ksu.edu)).
- All speakers, whether in-person or virtual, receive a \$200 honorarium (unless they are an employee of the State of Kansas).

Once the speaker has returned home after their visit, and all documents have been received by the accounting office, Whitney Finto will prepare the travel claim on their behalf. Reimbursement typically occurs within a few weeks of filing the claim.

## Appendix

### Sample Schedule: Visiting Speaker for the Departmental Seminar Series in the Division of Biology

[Speaker Name], PhD  
KSU Biology  
[Dates of visit]

Host: \_\_\_\_\_ 785-xxx-xxxx (cell) 785-xxx-xxxx (office) Ackert  
xxx Email: \_\_\_\_\_@ksu.edu

#### Sunday, March xx

8:20pm Arrive in Manhattan Regional Airport (MHK), American Airlines Flight xxxx  
[Host] will pick up at airport, check in at Bluemont hotel (reservation #),  
dinner at xxx

#### Monday, [Month Date]

\*\*\*Please take [speaker] to his/her next appointment (or let [host] know if unable to do so)\*\*\*

8:20am Pick up at the hotel lobby, [host]  
8:30-10:15am Breakfast & Meeting with [host]  
10:15-11:00am [Faculty #1], Chalmers xxx, (2-xxxx), (mention research topic if desired)  
11:00-11:45am [Faculty #2], Chalmers xxx, (2-xxxx), (mention research topic if desired)  
11:45-12:30pm [Faculty #3], Ackert xxx (2-xxxx), (mention research topic if desired)  
12:30-2:00pm Lunch with graduate students and postdocs (lunch location)  
Meet in Ackert xxx  
2:00-2:45pm [Faculty #4], Ackert xxx (2-xxxx), (mention research topic if desired)  
2:45-3:15pm [Faculty #5], Ackert xxx (2-xxxx), (mention research topic if desired)  
3:20-3:30pm Seminar preparation, Ackert 221  
3:30-4:30pm Seminar (Ackert 221), "Seminar Title"  
5:00-6:00pm Happy hour at JP's  
6:30pm Dinner at xxx with Host, [Faculty #1] and [Faculty #2].

#### Tuesday, [Month Date]

6:30am Departure MHK, American Airlines Flight xxxx