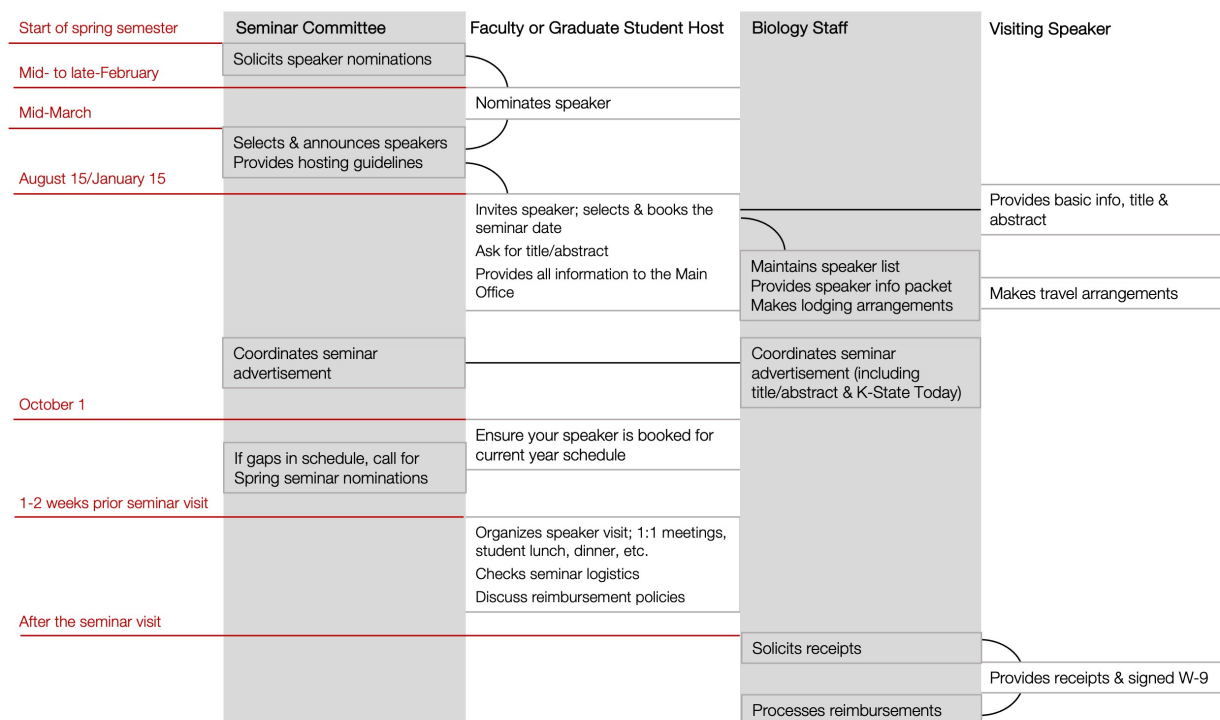


Guidelines for Hosting a Visiting Speaker for the Departmental Seminar Series in the Division of Biology – BGSA

March 2024

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

BGSA nominations are solicited early in the spring semester using the BGSA nomination form. If more than four speakers are nominated, BGSA solicits a vote to rank the nominations. The Division of Biology Seminar Committee meets in late February or early March to approve speakers then contacts nominators of the outcome. The BGSA representative to the committee attends this meeting, describes the nominated BGSA speakers, votes on all nominees, then reports back to the BGSA.

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 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.
- Speakers in the departmental seminar series are usually faculty or research

scientists with institutional appointments (including government labs).

- Graduate students may want to consider speakers who they think will provide a broad perspective on a topic and/or interesting career trajectory.
- 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, but this is not necessary.

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. These speakers can be high cost (e.g. including air fare). Seminar slots early in the fall semester (August and September) are often reserved for tenure and promotion.

- We prioritize equal representation of speakers that align with different sections in Biology.
- Speaker ranking is positively impacted by the following factors (in no specific order):
 - Speaker profile (we try to prioritize leaders in their field and those who support the development of graduate students)
 - 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 approve four full cost BGSA-nominated speakers)

BGSA 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 allot funding for speakers unable to speak during the established seminar time. 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) in the MainOffice. First check the shared 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 (AK116).

When you agree on a date with your speaker, immediately contact Sara Smith (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 (X) handle

Once all information is received, Sara Smith (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. This is sent to Sara Smith. 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 (Kansas State University) policy requires that speakers make their own travel arrangements and then submit receipts for reimbursement. ***Note that this may be changing for Fall 2024, and we will advise you as soon as we know more about this.*** 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 campus Holiday Inn. The cost for the room is billed directly to Biology. Sara Smith (ssara@ksu.edu) typically arranges hotel reservations. Please make sure to communicate with her if there is anything she needs to know about arranging accommodation, including arrival and departure dates and how many nights are required (typically no more than 2 nights' lodging should be requested).

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

BGSA hosts are expected to organize activities during the speakers' visit. Feel free to work with your faculty mentor to help arrange the schedule – or reach out to the seminar committee for suggestions. That said, hosts have great flexibility in planning the schedule. A sample schedule is provided. We encourage hosts to organize a schedule with the following components:

- 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 personalized message. This approach has proven effective in ensuring broad participation. Finally, when coordinating a speaker's schedule, it can be 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; for example, ask the faculty/student meeting with the speaker to take the speaker to their next appointment.

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) 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.

****BGSA 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). 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 Whitney Finto in the Business Office

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 non-itemized receipts. Receipts can be submitted through the host or directly to Whitney Finto (finto@ksu.edu).
- Alcohol during dinner is limited to \$50 (only for BGSA invited speakers). This *must* be on a separate itemized receipt.
- 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).
- 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.