



AAS Meeting Host Guidelines – January 2023

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Thank you for agreeing to host the annual meeting of the American Arachnological Society! This document is modified from one created originally by AAS member Rick Vetter. It is meant to assist you with meeting preparation and planning. The President Elect of the society is charged with modifying this document every year and sending it to the next meeting host.

Scheduling Meeting

- It is up to the host to determine the best dates for the meeting. Avoid dates of competing meetings such as Animal Behavior, Evolution, Ecological Society of America.
- Avoid holidays.
- Avoid scheduling the meeting such that it overlaps separate fiscal “years” (some university’s fiscal year begins July 1).
- Check and make sure cheap housing options (e.g., dorms) are available during the proposed dates.
- Lock in reservations for cheap housing and meeting rooms once dates are finalized.
- Be aware that if you reserve rooms, housing, catering very early, prices may increase by 10% by the time the meeting is held so take that increased pricing into account when estimating registration fees (see below).
- Get venue requirements on Liability Waivers early—these may be required for some or all of the meeting.
- Note that institutions may limit catering vendors.

Reducing Barriers to Attendance

Keep in mind while planning the meeting that various members of the community may face barriers to attending.

- Mobility – around the venue(s) and to and from accommodation.
- Financial – Minimize costs esp. for students, those who have to travel farther, those who need to care for family. Prioritize free social events.
- Audiovisual—See section on AV accessibility under Recruiting Assistants.
- Is the meeting at a location where all members of AAS will feel safe and welcome? Are there things that can be done at your location to make attendees feel safe and welcome?
- Space- can a Quiet Room with muted lighting, power outlets, and comfortable seating be provided for attendees to rest during events at the meeting? Are there appropriate comfort areas for nursing, lactation, and medical checks (i.e. insulin) with comfortable seating, a table, and a sink?

- Make the code of conduct prominent (including processes for reporting and dealing with violations). Are there ways to report misconduct without going through the AAS Executive Committee?
- Virtual options – live and non-live. See section about Virtual and Hybrid Content.

Recruiting Assistants

- Convince students, colleagues, family, friends to help plan and organize sub-committees. Make sure they are familiar with the code of conduct and willing to organize an inclusive meeting. Assemble a diverse team to broaden perspectives while planning the meeting.
- If you expect a large meeting, create committees to help with:
 - Finding and purchasing give-aways (e.g., tote bags, water bottles, mugs, notebooks).
 - Registration on opening day (2-3 volunteers needed).
 - Accompanying people activities (planning, logistics).
 - Transportation details (from airport, back to airport, to fieldtrip site – recruit drivers or hire drivers).
 - AV needs during meeting (preferably get professionals; but use students if they are good)
 - Facilitator for virtual components of meetings
 - Identify accessibility issues for people who have disabilities and are in need of accommodation or extra help. This may include providing closed captioning and/or transcripts of plenary talks.
 - Identify potential language barriers and recruit volunteers to help with Spanish/Portuguese speaking attendees (Get in touch with RAEL: <https://redaracno.wixsite.com/rael-aracnologia>)
 - Identify an individual or group of individuals who are media savvy and can promote the meeting to a wide diversity of potential participants, with a particular emphasis on under-represented groups. DEI and Outreach Committees can help with this.
 - Past meetings have utilized live Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook feeds to great response!
- Include contact numbers for responsible helpers/volunteers/students in program along with your contact information in case of emergencies.

Logo

- Create your logo early. One method could be to make logo creation a contest that opens following a meeting so that you can get the word out as part of the future meeting presentation.
- Use the logo to promote and advertise the meeting on:
 - The AAS website.

- The meeting website (if separate).
- The program.
- Teeshirts.
- Other promotional items.
- Consider creating a logo that symbolizes the place and/or your specialty.
- Send logo to the social media chair/committee and the graduate student representative to promote/advertise.

Registration Fees

- Create four tiers of in-person registration fees: Non-member fee (highest); AAS non-student member fee (next highest); non-member student fee (next); student AAS member fee (lowest). Be sure the non-member fees are higher than our membership fees so people have an incentive to join the society for the lower registration.
- Include one or multiple tiers for virtual/hybrid participation capped at 20% in-person registration.
- **Estimate attendance** between 80 – 140 (the more attractive locations will result in higher attendance).
- If you expect large attendance, consider also having events for accompanying people and charge an accompanying people registration fee. This money should cover:
 - Accompanying people’s attendance at the evening social events (including the banquet).
 - Daytime organized activities for these accompanying people.
 - Other costs related to these daytime activities such as: transportation costs, entrance fees to parks or museums, lunches for accompanying people.
- Registration fees should cover:
 - **Transportation costs** from housing (dorms or hotels) to venue (if needed; keep in mind that many attendees are older or otherwise mobility impaired so do not assume they can all walk to the venue if it is more than a mile walk).
 - All room rentals.
 - Event Services/AV Assistants fees (if there are any).
 - Costs for all **coffee breaks** during the meeting and any associated catering costs.
 - Costs for opening evening social event (room, food, drinks).
 - Costs for 1-2 additional evening social events (but see first bullet under Society Support below).
 - Total costs for all participants of the end-of-meeting banquet*.
 - Costs of giveaway items for attendees (e.g., bags, pens, notebooks, mugs).
 - 1 – 2 free drink tickets for opening evening social event. **Note section on Alcohol.**

- Name tag kits if you purchase these from an office supply store.
- Professional photographer for the group shot – hire one. Don't use your best buddy who says they're a great photographer.

*At the 2017 AAS Executive Committee meeting, it was decided that the banquet costs should be included in the Registration fees to enable all participants to attend the banquet. This is important since it is during the banquet that student presentation awards are announced.

- Create three tiers of registration fees: early, on time, **late registration fees**.

Hidden Fees and Surprise Costs

- PayPal fees (usually about 3%). The easiest way for attendees to pay is if the host sets up a PayPal account.
- Possible event **insurance costs**. Check into the need to get extra liability insurance; particularly if you plan to serve or sell alcohol. Some venues require that meeting hosts have Event Insurance policies in place for the conference.
- Although AAS is a Federal Tax Exempt organization, often host institutions do not consider the AAS meeting to be associated with that particularly tax exempt university or institution, even if they allow their facilities to be used for the meeting. As a result, the AAS meeting may fall outside the tax-exempt protection of the university and will be taxable at the state level. Hosts need to check on this early. If this is the case then:
 - Hosts can contact the AAS treasurer who may be able to apply for tax exempt status for that particular state.
 - If state taxes have to be included, then all costs will increase by 8 – 15% (depending on that state's tax rate).
- Rental costs for poster boards to hang posters – if you have a large meeting, you may have to rent more boards than your institution can provide.
- Possible airport shuttle fees or gas costs if host arranges to pick up arrivals.
- 10-20% gratuity for catering staff.
- Catering/building/room cleaning fees.
- 10% increased prices if you get estimates more than 1 year in advance.

Refunds

- Make your refund policy clear on the online registration site.
- Base refund dates (and levels of refund you can provide) on contract requirements (e.g., dorms, room rentals, catering staff).
- Create a cut-off date past which you will not offer refunds or will only honor partial refunds.

Virtual and Hybrid Material

- Membership overwhelmingly agrees they want virtual meeting options, but we don't yet have consensus of what that should be.
- In keeping with virtual programming, consider offering a virtual happy hour the week prior to the meeting. Successful happy hours in the past included themed breakout rooms with appropriate hosts (e.g. parenting and academia, museum studies, etc.)
- Consider hosting an event in-person or virtually (preferably both) for RAEL members to meet and advertise for new membership, since the Latin American participation is especially high via virtual programming.
- Social media engagement via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and others can be facilitated by local students, the Outreach or DEI committees.
- Making plenary and keynote talks available online (via YouTube with closed captioning or a transcript) has been done.
- Allowing engagement of virtual attendees during poster sessions can be achieved by uploading posters to the meeting site and allowing comment boxes online.
- Having a virtual social presence during the conference can help people who may feel uncomfortable approaching people they do not know to initiate conversation or introduce themselves. This could include anything from a virtual message board, Discord server, Slack channel, etc.

Sponsors

- Consider finding sponsors who can provide some level of funding in exchange for an advertisement online, in the program, or in exchange for a table in the registration area.
- Possible sponsors include: local book publishers of natural history books, pet stores dealing in live arachnids, gaming companies like Genius Games, photography and microscopy companies, forestry or sportswears outfitters, Wild Birds Unlimited, local microbreweries, local gaming bars.
- Request \$300 - \$500 from sponsors in exchange for ads, tables, etc. You can negotiate from there.

Society Support

- The AAS treasurer will provide meeting hosts \$2,000 to support the meeting. This money should not be used to lower registration fees but to enhance the quality of the meeting by allowing hosts to, for example, have an additional free social event.
- Any funds remaining after the meeting (including unused portion of this \$2,000) will be returned to the society treasurer after the meeting. If funds are owed by the host to caterers or outside contractors, then the host should contact the society President and Treasurer to ask the society to cover remaining costs; however, hosts should do their best to ensure that this is not necessary and that all costs are covered by the \$2,000 plus monies paid by attendees.
- The AAS Membership Secretary, Outreach committee and Webmaster will help the host promote the meeting to membership.

- The AAS Graduate Student Representative will help promote the meeting to students and via Social Media (listserv, Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Reach out directly to the graduate student representation to begin promotion here.
- The AAS Secretary is available to answer basic questions about planning and promoting a meeting.
- Past meeting hosts love to give you advice – don't hesitate to reach out to these people as well!
 - Past meetings:
 - 2022 (in-person): Host Jason Bond (jbond@ucdavis.edu) (UC Davis)
 - 2021 (virtual): Hosts Greta Binford (binford@lclark.edu), Brian Patrick (membership@americanarachnology.org), Sarah Stellwagen (sarah.stellwagen@gmail.com), Catherine Scott (catherine.elizabeth.scott@gmail.com), Sebastian Escheverri (echeverri.sa@gmail.com)
 - 2020 (virtual): Hosts Greta Binford (binford@lclark.edu), Mercedes Burns (burnsm@umbc.edu), Lisa Chamberland (chamberlandlisa8@gmail.com)
 - 2019 (in-person): Host Nadia Ayoub (ayoubn@wlu.edu) (Washington & Lee University)
 - 2018 (in-person) Hosts Cara Shillington (cshilling@emich.edu) and Anne Danielson-Francois (danfranc@emich.edu) (Eastern Michigan University)

Promote Meeting

- It is up to the host to send out reminders to attendees about deadlines.
- Work with the AAS Webmaster and your own local university/institution to create a website promoting the meeting.
- Website must state that organizers can and will make any reasonable accommodations for attendees with disabilities.
- Create an online registration site.
- Consider sending out regular announcements and reminders about the AAS meeting to: AAS members (of course), International Society of Arachnology members, British Society of Arachnology members, European Society of Arachnology members, Entomological Society of America, Arachnid listserv, AAS Facebook page, (see “Society Support” above for who can help with these promotions). The websites of all these societies should list who the membership secretaries are.
- Make a sincere effort to advertise the meeting in ways that make it obvious and attractive to under-represented groups. For example, artists, clubs, and companies can vend; amateur arachnologists and enthusiasts are welcome and can attend and present; the Outreach and DEI committees are working to provide programming to engage all attendees.

Set Deadlines

- Early registration should begin 1.5 – 2 months prior to the meeting dates.
- Set early, on-time, and late registration deadlines two weeks prior to when you actually need people to register.
- Increase fees as each deadline passes.
- Set your abstract deadline later than your meeting deadline
- You will need to also create a “drop-dead” deadline for abstract submission (You need to finalize your program at some point!).
- Create just two deadlines for abstracts: on-time and final abstract submission date.
- Set a drop-dead deadline for your housing (you will probably need to do this anyway).
- Consider a drop-dead deadline for all registration.
- Send out regular reminders (via the AAS membership secretary) to membership each time one of your deadlines is approaching. This keeps up excitement and awareness about the meeting and may boost your attendance.
- Consider distributing .ics files for people to incorporate into their Microsoft/Google/Apple calendars.

Housing

- 60 – 80% of attendees stay in cheap housing option, so make sure you have one. Dorms are typical.
- Be sure you can accommodate this many attendees in your cheap housing option. Consider reserving more dorm rooms than you think you will need.
- The host will likely be the person to assign attendees to dorm rooms, assign roommates or suite mates since the host knows most attendees and can house people of similar ages/interests.
- Ask attendees when they register for the cheap housing who they want as a roommate/suite mate.
- Allow registration in single housing at an increased rate over double housing—some folks prefer a solo room.
- Arrange reduced rate blocks of rooms at area hotels as well if you can – that is always appreciated.
- These days, attendees can easily find other housing options via AirBnB, VRBO, and other online sites.

Transportation

- As mentioned above, provide information about transportation to your area, from the airport/train station to the venue on the meeting website.

- Consider offering transportation from the airport to the venue (but don't stress if this is too cumbersome, logistically difficult, or expensive). Attendees are grown-ups and, as long as you provide information about transportation options (cabs, Uber/Lyft, vans that can be arranged at the airport), and help facilitate safe transport for attendees arriving at night (i.e. connect emails of attendees that want to commute together from the airport) attendees should be able to find their way to the venue!
- Keep in mind (see above) that many AAS members are older or mobility challenged so do not expect them to walk a mile or more from the dorms to the venue – arrange van pickups and build this into your costs.
- Lime has an accessibility program where vehicles can be reserved in advance and are free to use for 24 hours. Their website is here: <https://www.li.me/why/community/lime-assist>.
- Other vehicle services similar to Lime (Bird, Unagi, etc) may be available, with varying cost structures for reserving units.

Website

- Create an online site for registration (note that your university/institution may charge fees for creating and maintaining this site).
- Website should be translatable via Google Translate, so HTML is preferable.
- Attendees should be able to go to this one site and register, pay (via PayPal or Square), order everything they want (housing, tee shirts, fieldtrips, other excursions).
- Attendees should also be able to submit their abstracts via this site. Create abstract submission site in such a way that you can just copy and paste abstracts directly into your program.
- Provide detailed instructions about posters – sizes allowed, orientations allowed.
- Figure out a way for people to pay: create a separate bank account and/or PayPal account, or work with your university to create a mechanism for people to pay for the meeting.
 - PayPal usage requires an international credit card for international attendees. One workaround is to have a regional international contact (i.e. RAEL, Red de Arachnologia Emergente Latina) acquire registrations from international attendees and pay them in one lump sum to the Host via PayPal.
- Be aware that if money comes through your institution rather than via a separate PayPal account you set up, the university/institution may take any unspent money. Unspent expenditures need to be returned to the society if at all possible.
- Provide lots of information on your website about the meeting including:
 - What is special about the location?
 - If you can coordinate pick-ups of attendees from the airport, it is a nice thing to offer (but often a hassle and an expense); otherwise post very clear instructions how to get from the airport/train station to the venue.
 - **Map** of the campus and the town.

- A link to registered attendees – knowing who is planning to attend can often drive additional attendance.
- Clear links/instructions for registering, paying, and submitting abstracts.
- Information about all housing options (provide links to area hotels/B&Bs).
- Transportation/accessible mobility options on campus. Let potential attendees know if vans will be running between housing and meeting areas, if bike or scooter rentals are available, etc. See Transportation for tips.

Meals

- If you are offering dormitory housing with meal plans, make sure the meal plan options are clear (e.g., breakfast only, lunch only, breakfast + lunch).
- If there are area restaurants within walking distance of the venue, then do not offer dinner options as part of the meal package. You won't have many takers and dinners are good times for people to network.
- If you schedule several evening social events, make sure you include appetizers, substantial snacks, or light meals and drinks during the socials. Many students (in particular) will take advantage of these light meals to avoid having to pay for a more substantial dinner.

Alcohol

- **Some considerations: alcohol isn't necessary to socialize. Drinking can make non-drinkers uncomfortable. Drinking can also increase the likelihood of poor behavior and code of conduct violations.**
- Find out alcohol rules for the venue (e.g., some universities are dry campuses).
- If your venue is dry, consider holding the opening social in an area hotel meeting room instead (and build this into your costs).
- Some venues do not allow alcohol sales without liquor licenses – find out what the rules are.
- Some venues require bartenders / caterers to serve alcohol.
- Some venues require police / security presence if alcohol is offered / consumed.
- Consider renting a hospitality suite at a nearby hotel where attendees can gather in the evenings to socialize (and can bring their own libations). Be sure this suite is well away from rooms!

Program – what to include

- Provide an electronic version of the meeting program. The e-copy should be downloadable to smart phones and other devices. If you have an “at a glance” 1 pager schedule, this can be provided at registration.
- A limited number of long form hard copy programs are helpful to have at registration.

- If you expect large attendance (and a large number of abstracts / presentations), get someone to help plan and create the program.
- Include emergency contact numbers for yourself and trusted assistants in the program. And include other emergency numbers (e.g., 9-1-1).
- The AAS code of conduct
- Include land acknowledgements in program and welcoming remarks.
- Include any advertisements or lists of meeting sponsors (see under “Sponsors” above).
- Include a **map** of the venue / the campus / the town in the program if you can.
 - Should include location of Quiet Room(s) and locations for nursing/lactation
- Consider including a list of area bars and restaurants in the program.
- Include a list of attendees alphabetically with names, addresses, and at least contact emails.
- Include a general daily schedule indicating when and where the following will take place:
 - Oral presentations.
 - Poster sessions.
 - Special meetings such as: the AAS **Executive Committee** meeting, the AAS Business meeting, the social events, the group photo, the banquet.
- Include detailed list of oral presentations that will be given each day during each time slot.
- Include the names of session **moderators** (and please have the courtesy to contact these people in advance to make sure they are willing to be moderators!).
- Include a list of poster presentation titles and presenters.

Student Competition Details

- THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT: Mark with asterisks student oral presenters and poster presenters who are taking part in the **student competition**.
 - Make sure you have a tick-box on the online abstract submission site for students who wish to participate in the competition.
 - Be sure you point students to the AAS online rules of participation.
 - Send this list of student competitors from the program to the AAS President Elect as soon as you have finalized the program.
 - The President Elect will find judges, send judges competition criteria, and will contact student competitors to verify their status and eligibility.
 - IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SEND A LIST OF STUDENT COMPETITORS TO THE PRESIDENT ELECT. Do not forget this.

Program – things to consider

- It is nice to ask your University Dean, Provost, Department Chair, or some other luminary to welcome attendees prior to beginning the very first session.
- You, as host, should also say a few words of welcome – and use that opportunity to thank your assistants, name them, and ask them to stand.
- Invite first-time attendees of AAS to stand or wave, and give them applause and cheers to welcome them in!
- Consider inviting 1 – 3 plenary, or keynote speakers. The ICA congresses and the European Congress of Arachnology meetings regularly have keynote or plenary speakers. Such keynote speakers are a great thing to add to the program.
- Consider including a special speaker or program that emphasizes the diverse community of arachnologists. Try to design the event so that it is as inclusive and inviting as possible. If there are multiple plenary speakers, consider making one an ECR.
- Consider an outreach event for the public on the same day as the welcome social, i.e. iNaturalist BioBlitz. Alternatively, consider running (or inviting someone to run) a workshop on the first day that focuses on the host labs' specialty, would be useful to early career researchers, promotes DEI within AAS and/or encourages collaboration across fields within arachnology.
- Photography contest with various categories.
- Arrange for competent Event Services or AV personnel to handle the inevitable problems with presentations. Do not assume that the session moderator can deal with these problems. Have an Events Services professional who works for the venue on speed dial at the very least.
- If your meeting is on campus and if it begins over the weekend, make sure that the campus folks know that your meeting will be happening so that they do not turn off the air conditioning and that they unlock the doors of the venue!
- Assign a competent student or assistant to pull up the next oral presentation while the previous speaker is answering questions.
- Assign session moderators who are not timid about cutting long-winded speakers short or saying that there is no time for questions – you need to keep things moving and on-schedule!
- Do not assign judges of the student competition as moderators.

Oral Presentations

- Require speakers to upload their talks to a Google Drive/DropBox or deliver their talk (PDF or PPT) to the meeting computer ahead of talk sessions. This saves a ton of trouble switching cords or using different computers.

- Pay for a professional AV person to handle problems. Really – you do not want to deal with these yourself and don't make moderators deal with them.
- Try not to start sessions too early—**go for 8:30-9:30am**. It is okay to begin the first day's session early when people are still fresh; but as the meeting (and social events) progress, consider pushing the start time a bit later.
- Try to end no later than 5 – 5:30 p.m. if possible.
- Consider including invited symposia – you will have to solicit topics well in advance of the meeting and make sure those colleagues suggesting topics have speakers in mind and can organize the symposium.
- Organize oral presentations by subject areas (e.g., behavioral ecology, agroecosystems, systematics/taxonomy, smaller orders, morphology/physiology).
- Schedule notoriously long-winded or disorganized speakers at the ends of sessions so attendees can just get up and leave for break or lunch and so that person does not throw off the schedule.
- Schedule lively speakers at critical times when attendees need an attention booster! **When is this? Maybe following breaks or towards the end of the day?**
- Allow attendees, at most, to present one oral and one poster presentation. Do not allow any attendee to present more than one oral or more than one poster unless you are short of presentations.
- If you must have concurrent sessions (rare at annual AAS meetings), do not schedule student competitors in both sessions – this makes it difficult for judges to attend all student competitors' talks).

Additional Annual Meetings

- Schedule the **Business Meeting** in such a way that attendees are encouraged to attend – e.g., schedule it prior to the very last talk about next year's meeting. **Encourage students to attend the business meeting by engaging the Student Rep and reminding them how much the society provides students in travel grants, research grants, reduced registration costs. The AAS committees appreciate feedback and this is a major way to provide it.**
- Remember to include promotional presentation by the **next AAS meeting host** as the very last talk or during the Business Meeting.
- Remember to include the following in the schedule and arrange a meeting room for each:
 - **AAS Executive Committee** meeting (should not be during the check-in day; should be the 2nd evening). Make sure you provide food for the EC members – this meeting typically lasts between 2 – 4 hours.
 - **Graduate Student social gathering** – coordinate with the AAS Grad student representative and make sure this is scheduled early in the meeting so students can bond.

- Group photo
- AAS Business Meeting (see above).
- Scheduled time and place for the student competition judges to meet prior to the banquet.

Breaks

- Schedule at least two ½ hour **coffee breaks** (morning and afternoon).
- Six 15 minute talks per session is pretty typical (sessions are usually 1.5 hours long).
- Lunch break should be 1.5 hours if at all possible. Longer if you can.
- Have your caterers set up two or more break stations so you don't have long lines to get coffee.
- Offer substantial healthy options during the morning break; afternoon break is less critical since people will have had lunch already.
- If you can, include information about what foods will be available in the program. Allergy and dietary labels (Dairy, gluten, vegan etc.) are essential.
- Coffee is absolutely critical!

Posters

- Provide poster attachment devices – tape, pushpins, Velcro.
- Do not schedule student competitors during last session of the meeting – the judges often must meet at that time (prior to the banquet) to decide on winners.
- If you must schedule two poster sessions to accommodate all the posters submitted, it is better to have all posters in place at the same time (1st or 2nd night of the meeting) and just split presenters into two groups. Do this if you have lots of student poster competitors; otherwise judges cannot meet / talk to all of them.
- Allow plenty of space for the session. Posters should be left in place for the entirety of the meeting.
- Number posters in the program and use this same numbering system for the poster boards in the room (i.e., presenters need to find their number and hang their poster THERE – that way attendees can more easily find posters of interest).
- Mark #s of student competition posters with an asterisk so judges can more easily find these posters. Do this both in the program (of course) as well as directly on the poster boards.

Things to provide presenters & to remind presenters

- Have some sort of timer available for session **moderators** (in case they do not want to use their phones).
- Have a laser pointer available or make sure moderators know how to use pointers that are part of the slide advance device.

- Have **microphone** and / or lapel microphones available and make sure that all speakers use microphones. Many AAS members have hearing impairments. It is beyond rude for a speaker who thinks he/she has a loud voice to assume he/she does not need a microphone. **Every speaker must use a microphone.**
- You or the moderators should remind speakers to repeat questions.

Foreign Attendees

- Some foreign attendees will ask for a formal letter of invitation. They may need this to get a visa to the U.S.
- Many foreign attendees will expect a Certificate of Attendance at the end of the conference. If they ask for this, it is because their universities require some sort of official document of attendance. **The DEI Committee can supply a template.**
- AAS is trying to encourage closer interactions between U.S. scientists and Latin American colleagues. If you have a student fluent in Spanish, it is a nice thing to have that person available during registration to help with translation (if needed). And let attendees know in advance that this service will be available. **See Recruiting Assistants, and get in touch with RAEL <https://redaracno.wixsite.com/rael-aracnologia>.**

Emergency phone #s and contacts

- Have emergency contact numbers in the program for attendees.
- And you, as host, should have emergency contact #s in your phone of: caterers, bartenders, security services, university (or venue) contacts, van drivers, etc.
- **Include, within the first few pages, the AAS Code of Conduct and who to contact for violations of the CoC. It should be made clear that students can report to the host, an Executive Committee member, a member of the DEI Committee and/or the Graduate Student Representative for any concerns about the conduct of other members.**
- **Following the code of conduct, include information for emergency resources, e.g. campus police, professional services for victims of any form of violence, support for persons with physical disabilities or “neurodiverse” peoples, etc.**

Keeper of money

- Have a box or bag specifically to store cash. Some attendees will pay cash for tee shirts or social events.
- Have a receipt book – these receipts (or the carbon copy) are a good way to track online payments (see below).
- Have some change on hand for cash transactions during registration.
- The AAS has a credit card reader or you can have attendees who want to pay with credit card do so by logging into the AAS website, going to <http://www.americanarachnology.org/donations.html>, and clicking on the Donate button. They can then make an online credit card payment. However, please keep track of these:

Amount of the transaction; name of purchaser; and what transaction was for so that you can pass this information on to the AAS treasurer.

- Assign a trusted assistant to be in charge of the cash box each day / each evening. Otherwise, there is a risk that the cash box will be left unguarded in the meeting venue overnight.

Socials

- Have socials! Ideally, have some sort of social event every night. Use the \$2,000 AAS provides to make your meeting memorable. Socials are important opportunities for attendees to meet one another and network.
- Welcome social during the first evening of the conference:
 - Have it somewhere that allows food and beverages.
 - Provide substantial food – many attendees will not have eaten prior to arrival.
 - Include location of social in program.
 - Remind attendees code of conduct applies at this and all social events!
- Consider social event(s) that highlight something special about your region.
- During 2nd evening of the meeting, coordinate with Graduate Student Representative to schedule the **student / early career social**.
 - The Student Rep should work out a list of possible venue with guidance from local students
 - Provide Student Rep with projected student attendance to ensure sufficient space
 - Ensure location has food and non-alcoholic drink options—some people don't drink alcohol
- If you offer a hospitality room for evening gatherings, make sure this room is away from dorm rooms. Not all arachnologists want to be kept up until the wee hours of the morning.
- Be sure you have vegetarian / gluten free options at any social where you serve food.
- Be sure you have a variety of non-alcoholic beverage options for people.
- Consider organizing (or having Grad Student Rep or DEI committee) a PhD/postdoc lunch gathering.
- DEI committee will help organize an LGBTQ+ Breakfast for the 2nd morning of the meeting.
 - DEI is also planning to have a Lunch of the Future listening session at AAS 2023 to discuss how to better serve URM communities.
 - Goal of these affinity groups is to provide some structure (introductions, opportunities to provide feedback) but allow networking.
 - Allies of these affinity groups will be welcomed in a listening capacity.

Casual Night with Arachnids

- Some meetings the host organizes an evening of casual (non-“sciencey”) presentations during which attendees can show their cool photos of spectacular arachnids, arachnid sex videos, or other arachnid-related shows. Consider doing the following:
 - Have a place online where people can indicate that they have a presentation to give.
 - Limit presentations to 15 minutes.
 - Have a **moderator** to keep the evening moving (make sure the moderator is in good humor as this should be a fun evening!).
 - Consider providing prizes for the best presentation – something fun and low key.
 - Consider promoting this event to the general public or members of the campus community – but if you do so, be sure that speakers know there may be families/kids/others present in the audience.
 - Consider inviting journalists to attend this event.
 - If you open it to the public, consider asking a few colleagues to be available prior to the start of the program to answer arachnid-related questions, show off live specimens, or answer questions about “what spider is this?”

Banquet

- Include all costs of the banquet in the registration fees. This will encourage/enable all attendees (particularly students) to attend.
- Do not offer a different registration rate for those who must leave prior to the banquet. Explain to those who request this that they are subsidizing attendance of students – otherwise many students could not attend the banquet if it was not folded into the registration fees. If attendees who plan to leave early want to complain about not getting a reduced registration price, tell them to contact the AAS President or Secretary since this mandate is from the AAS Executive Committee.
- Cash bar versus free wine at dinner is up to the host and depends on costs.
- Schedule a time (after people have had dinner) for:
 - The host to thank attendees for coming
 - For the Society President to offer remembrance of arachnologists who have died that past year
 - For the President Elect to introduce judges of student competition and to announce student winners. Remind President Elect to invite student competitors to ask judges for feedback. Awards include \$100 - \$200 (check with the AAS treasurer) for winners of oral and poster presentations; \$50 - \$100 for runner ups; and free membership to all winners and runner-ups. Sometimes books or other special gifts are included in the prizes.

Auctions: silent and live

- By tradition, AAS holds a silent and a live auction during the banquet.
- Meeting hosts should send reminder to attendees (or should ask AAS membership secretary to send msg to members) asking them to bring items for the auction.
- Auction items should be available for viewing prior to the banquet – set them up in the registration area on the last day or at least have them set up as people enter area where banquet is being held.
- Have a box for auction items during registration. People will bring items with them to include in the auction.
- Provide auctioneers pre-printed bid sheets for the silent auction items and make sure there is a spreadsheet with all silent and live auction items listed so that prices can be recorded, winners' names can be recorded, and a record can be kept of payments made and payments due.
- During the banquet the host or a proxy should encourage people to bid on the silent auction items and to view the live auction items.
- Make a big deal as the end of the silent auction approaches (time to be determined by the host or auctioneers).
- Make a 10 second count down to the end of the silent auction and have assistants prepared to pick up bid sheets.
- Announce winners and totals of silent auction items. Pre-arrange with the society Treasurer to be ready for the onslaught of winners who want to pay. The Treasurer will typically recruit an assistant to help collect payments but, if not, you recruit an assistant.
- Payments can be made via the AAS credit card reader or via the AAS donation page (see above).
- Live auction: find auctioneers ahead of time. People who have done this in the past include George Uetz, Al Cady, Andy Roberts, Mercedes Burns, Rick Vetter, Paula Cushing, Brian Patrick. Leave it up to the auctioneers to decide what items to include in the live auction.
- Live auction can begin when people are having desert. Auctioneers should promote (NOT downplay) items, encourage bidding, and keep the live auction moving. Auctioneers should keep “inside” lab jokes (understood only by a fraction of attendees) to a minimum. Auctioneers should focus attention on the items and on the bidders. Make sure there are two auctioneers – one to show items to prospective bidders and one to play up the bidding amongst attendees.
- The auctions are a good way to raise money for student research funds. But long-time members of the AAS find long auctions really tedious and annoying. Keep things moving and if you have arranged alternative entertainment (e.g., a live band, open evening access to a museum or other facility where the banquet is held) then you can forego the live auction and just have the silent auction.

- Consider a student-only section of the auction for more people to get involved! Students often get priced out of the auction.
- If at all possible, include a DJ or live band that people can dance to after the auction is finished.

Group photo

- Hire a professional photographer who knows how to set up a group shot.
- Take the group photo early in the meeting (e.g., before lunch on the first day).
- Rick Vetter can send you a file of giant numbers that can be used when taking the group photo to facilitate identifying faces.
- Post the photo on the meeting website, send it to the AAS Webmaster, and send it to Lenny Vincent (AAS Archivist).
- Offer to send the file to all attendees or have a way for them to download it after the meeting.
- Do not forget the group photo.
- Do not let your photographer buddy take it; hire a pro.

Host Bell

- The use of a small meeting bell to announce the end of breaks/beginning of sessions was first used in 1996 at the Tucson meeting.
- A larger bell was purchased for the society by Matt Persons for his meeting and has been used ever since. This bell is traditionally passed from one host to the next during the promotional talk advertising the next meeting.

Reprint / Free Stuff Table

- At recent meetings a table is typically set up in the registration area where people can bring old reprints to give away.
- People can also leave other promotional fliers or other free items on this table.
- Be sure the free-stuff table is set distinctly apart from the table where auction items are being displayed.
- Be aware that you (the host) will end up with stacks of useless reprints that have not been taken (since most papers are now easily accessible online).

Field Trip

- A post-meeting field trip is typically offered to attendees. Occasionally, at larger meetings a mid-meeting excursion instead or in addition to a post-meeting excursion is included as an optional outing.
- Some attendees WILL want to collect at the fieldtrip site so be sure to arrange collecting permits if necessary.

- Provide the coordinates for the fieldtrip site to those planning on collecting.
- Have phone numbers at hand for bus/van drivers in case they do not show up on time. Have a back-up plan for transportation to the site.
- Make sure every van/bus driver has directions to the field site.
- Arrange for water and lunches for all attendees.
- Be mindful of the location: areas to sit and rest, is there enough shade, what will the temperature be, bathrooms on site, etc. Make sure this information is communicated to attendees.
- Carry a first aid kit (with Epi-Pen) and make sure you have assistants traveling with each bus load who can deal with emergency situations, can call for help, can take head counts and make sure that all people who arrived on that bus/van depart in that bus/van.
- Print out a dozen sets of driving directions to the field site for those attendees who want to drive themselves.

Post-Meeting Tasks

- Be sure the next host has received the meeting bell.
- Return any remaining funds to the society.
- Work with DEI committee to send out a brief post-meeting survey in order to get any feedback anonymously.
- Send out meeting group photo and make it available on the AAS website.
- Send abstracts to website manager to post on the AAS website.
- Take a spa vacation!