A Guide to Preparing Concurrent Session (Invited Talks) Proposals for ICPP 2018

ICPP 2018 Theme: Plant Health in a Global Economy

ICPP 2018 Vision: An engaged world community of plant health scientists advancing knowledge for a safe, affordable, secure supply of food, feed and fiber for a growing population.

Before submission. Concurrent sessions are a key part of the ICPP. They have the potential to inform and inspire. Any subject that is especially topical, useful, or has matured sufficiently to merit review is appropriate. Any ISPP and APS subject matter committee, group, or individual member can submit a proposal to organize and moderate the concurrent session at ICPP 2018. The Scientific Program Committee anticipates receiving far more proposals than can be accommodated during the Congress. Here’s how you can increase the probability that your concurrent session will be among those selected.

1. **Topics with broad global appeal will be more competitive than those with a very limited audience.** Ideally, the topic should not only have broad global appeal and relevance, but should be presented in such a way that it can be appreciated by a broad cross-section of plant pathologists. Complexity is expected, but it must be explained and placed in context for a more generalist audience. This principle must be evident in the submission and should be communicated effectively to all speakers if the concurrent session is selected.

2. **Demonstrate an awareness of what has gone before.** Do your homework and ensure that a similar concurrent session was not held in the recent past. If a similar session was held recently, justify why the topic should be revisited.

3. **The best proposals assemble panels of highly qualified speakers, and do so with attention to issues of diversity and inclusion.** Choose your speakers well. Technical expertise of speakers is one part of the total package. The Scientific Program Committee will evaluate your proposal to ensure that you have a balanced slate with respect to other considerations. Do your proposed speakers represent gender and international diversity, multiple institutions, and different types of careers within plant pathology? Are junior and senior scientists included? Do the speakers for your proposed concurrent session represent diverse perspectives on the topic? The Scientific Program Committee is aware of challenges such considerations present when assembling a slate of four (4) speakers, but proposals attentive to aspects of diversity are likely to be considered favorably. Attention to diversity in the composition of your planning committee will increase the likelihood of effective representation of diversity in invited speakers.

4. **Develop and demonstrate broad support for the proposed concurrent session.** Joint sponsorship of proposed concurrent sessions by multiple committees, boards, and offices provides the Scientific Program Committee with an important metric by which to judge the potential appeal to a broader audience. Likewise, if you have outside funds to support the session, make this known in the proposal.

5. **Develop interesting and informative titles for the concurrent session.** As far as possible, avoid undefined acronyms. Titles should inform and spark interest without trivializing the subject matter.

6. **Understand that not all submitted concurrent sessions can be accepted.** Inevitably, some proposals will not be accepted due to limited space on the program. Also be prepared for the possibility of revision and resubmission. Some proposed concurrent sessions may require substantive changes to be approved. A sincere commitment to accommodate suggested revisions will greatly increase the likelihood of approval upon resubmission.

If your proposal is selected. Once you have been notified by the ICPP 2018 Scientific Program Committee that your concurrent session has been approved, you will receive information about contacting your speakers and beginning the process of coordinating their presentations. Share the abstracts of your concurrent session presentations among the speakers. Set up a conference call, if possible to discuss the topic of coordination among the presentations, as well as the need to appeal to a broad global audience. A commitment to this process can be what separates a disconnected series of presentations from a well-coordinated and thought-provoking concurrent session.