

THE SEISMOGRAM

News and info to help our student and early-career scientists advance their careers

Seismological Society of America:
Advancing Earthquake Science Worldwide

ISSUE SEVEN: 1 AUGUST 2018

[View this in your Web Browser](#)

[HOW TO ORGANIZE A TECHNICAL SESSION](#)

[STUDENT TRAVEL WISHES GRANTED](#)

[LORI DENGLER ON COLLABORATION](#)

[FOLLOW SSA ON LINKEDIN TODAY!](#)

How to Organize a Technical Session

Organizing a technical session for SSA's Annual Meeting is one of the best ways to learn more about seismology and connect with other scientists in your field. Here's how to do it in four easy steps.

1 Choose a topic

Elizabeth Vanacore, researcher at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez and co-chair of last year's Annual Meeting, says "a good place to start is to think about what session *you* would like to see."

Eric Calais of Ecole Normale Supérieure in France offers another useful starting point: "I would ask myself 'what is the key question in my field that I can gather people around?'" That question should be "something you and a community think is important" and "triggers interest because of its novelty."

2 Create your session proposal

What makes a good proposal? 2019 Annual Meeting co-chair Joan Gomberg of the U.S. Geological Survey says it "should identify a topic of interest to a critical mass of people, contain a compelling description of why a session would be useful and what it will cover, and at least a few ideas for potential presenters."

The description is "key to attracting other scientists to your session" says Vanacore, who adds that it's important to include "what types of abstracts you are looking for, and why the session is scientifically important or interesting."

3 Get speakers and conveners

Who would you like to speak at, or convene, your session? Looking to those you know – or you've at least met – is a good first step.

"Be brave," says Vanacore. "At most meetings you meet and receive cards of other scientists who work within your specific area, so break out the rolodex and reach out." She adds that "your mentors may have contacts you do not and may be able to help you with an introductory email or phone call."

Michael Bostock, professor at the University of British Columbia and co-chair of the 2019 Annual Meeting, suggests another method to organizers: "Survey the recent literature to see who has been publishing in their target fields."

Gomberg adds that conveners “need not be famous. Most important is their ability to speak clearly and keep speakers on schedule.”

4 Promote your session

Once your session has been approved, it’s important to generate interest in it. “You can officially invite one or two speakers, then you target other relevant groups of people to publicize your session,” says Southern California Earthquake Center’s Christine Goulet, who advocates reaching out to institutions.

“Most research centers and groups have their own mailing lists – for example, if your session is on national seismic hazard maps, USGS has a mailing list for that. If it’s on seismology and wave propagation, you can contact SCEC. If you don’t know many people, that’s a good way to publicize your topic.”



Submit your proposal!

SSA's 2019 Annual Meeting takes place 23-26 April 2019 in Seattle, Washington.

Help steer the scientific conversation!

*Submit your technical session proposal online from **15 August** until **1 October 2018**.*

Need some inspiration? Check out last year's sessions [here](#).

Student Travel Grant Winners on the 2018 Annual Meeting

Thanks to contributions from SSA members, 12 students received grants that helped fund their travel to the 2018 Annual Meeting. Read on for the highlights of their experience in Miami. And mark your calendar to apply for a 2019 Annual Meeting Travel Grant this November!



“There were people who expressed interest in my work and encouraged me to contact them about opportunities that may lead to full-time research following my Ph.D... I would not have had this opportunity without the grant.” — Pamela Moyer, a student at the University of New Hampshire

“I received lots of constructive feedback for my own research.” — University of Utah student Sin-Mei Wu

“Now I know scientists [whom] I can collaborate with in the future!” — Jefferson Yarce, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Colorado Boulder

"We discussed our feelings, past experiences, future perspectives and successes and frustrations about science... I am glad to see that SSA cares about female participation in science." — Claudia Aristizábal, who recently received her Ph.D. from Université Grenoble Alpes in France, on the Women in Seismology networking reception

"I definitely had some new ideas by looking at what other researchers are working on... Also, I felt motivated by discussing and testing different ideas with others." — Lizhong Zhang, a graduate student at the University of Bristol

Collaboration 101 with Lori Dengler

Collaborating on research is a great way to build your network, expand your knowledge and bring together complementary skill sets. But it's not without its challenges. Lori Dengler, the 2017 recipient of SSA's Frank Press Public Service Award, details how to find the right people to work with, how to manage collaborations and how to avoid conflicts.

SSA: How do you find the right people to collaborate with, especially if they're not someone you already know?

Lori Dengler: Many of us find ourselves in positions where we aren't surrounded by many people who are working on similar or related projects, so it takes a little work to find collaborators. Annual Meetings and workshops are a good place to begin. If there is someone presenting a paper or poster on a topic that interests you, make an effort to meet them. Follow up with an email.



SSA: What's the best way to delegate tasks and responsibilities? How do you ensure that your collaborators don't do too little — or too much?

LD: This can often be a touchy subject. In a large group effort, often one or two people take on the major effort and it may seem like others are just along to add their name on a paper. Everyone is going to find their own comfort level, but communication is always the key. I've been involved with a number of post-tsunami survey projects that [require] writing paper(s) to summarize what was learned. Agree to who will take the lead and what everyone's responsibilities are. There will always be changes as the project proceeds, but having a clear framework is essential with deadlines to keep it moving forward.

SSA: How do you make the best use of each collaborator's individual skills and strengths?

LD: This is something you should have a good idea about before you begin a project. We have areas of expertise and reputations and something to contribute — that's why you were brought into the project in the first place. Students will hopefully have faculty mentors who can draw them into collaborative projects. For students looking at advisors or academic programs, it's worth asking about opportunities for collaboration.

SSA: What are some of the common challenges that collaborators face with one another? How can conflicts between collaborators be mitigated?

LD: The biggest problem is missing deadlines and not contributing in a timely way. I've been on both sides of this in a collaborative project. Working in isolation with little contact among collaborators exacerbates the problem. When collaborators are in physically different places, it's important to keep in touch regularly via email and conference calls and if possible, arrange meetings where you can all be together. I've certainly had differences of opinion with collaborators but have always been able to talk through them. Mutual respect and the willingness to listen to each other's perspectives and interpretations are essential and will usually result in a better final product.

Stay Connected to SSA

Follow SSA on LinkedIn to stay up-to-date with important Society news, including reminders about upcoming deadlines for grant submissions and calls for papers.

Need some career advice? Send your burning job-related questions to info@seismosoc.org with "Seismo-gram" in the subject line, and we'll do our best to address them in a future issue.



Seismological Society of America

400 Evelyn Avenue, Suite 201
Albany, CA 94706-1375
United States

Email info@seismosoc.org
Call us: 510-525-5474

If you would like to unsubscribe [click here](#).