

# Suggestions and Instructions for Poster Presenters in the 2008 EEB Spring Research Symposium

There are literally thousands of websites that provide suggestions for scientific poster presentation. Here are three suggested sites to review in preparation for this EEB symposium:

[http://www.asp.org/education/howto\\_onPosters.html](http://www.asp.org/education/howto_onPosters.html)

<http://www.cs.kent.edu/~volkert/CEC2005/CEC05PosterGuidelines.html>

[http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ne2005/main\\_slideandposter.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~ne2005/main_slideandposter.html)

As you develop your poster and before you print it, you should consider the following questions:

1. Who is your principal audience? What do you want to communicate to this audience?
2. How well does your title convey the nature and scope of your study?
3. Are your name (and co-authors' names) and your department and university affiliation prominently displayed? Did you provide contact information?
4. Does your introduction make the context of your study clear? *Most introductions are too long* – is yours overly long?
5. How prominently is your research question and/or hypothesis displayed? Where is it located on your poster? *Eye level is best.*
6. Do your displayed results (images, tables or graphs) directly address your stated hypothesis or question?
7. Are your results (images, tables, or graphs) accompanied by clear legends so that a quick look is sufficient for comprehension? Avoid lengthy explanations of methods; if appropriate, draw a cartoon or diagram to communicate the key points of your approach.
8. Are your conclusions prominent? Bulleted? Only the important ones? Avoid a lengthy discussion of your results.
9. **Does your poster adequately convey a memorable “take home” message?**
10. Is your poster neat? Pleasing? Readable from 4 ft away?
11. Did you acknowledge/thank your funding sources and individuals who helped you?
12. Make sure that your faculty sponsor approves everything included in the poster.

Poster presentations serve a very important role in the scientific careers of undergraduate and graduate students. First and foremost, they announce your interests and your abilities to your future colleagues. A good poster presented by a sharp and well-prepared author makes a favorable, lasting profession. You'll never know when someone who will evaluate your application for graduate admission or a fellowship will have been one of the scientists who saw your poster and remembered your “take home message”. Consequently, it is important to develop the best possible poster you can.

About co-authors: You should include in your poster mostly work that **YOU** did. At **undergraduate** conferences (and those that provide prizes for best undergraduate poster), the

emphasis is on YOU: how well you have done what you set out to do and how well you can communicate the aims, the approach, and the results of your work. Your sponsor's name should appear last in the list of authors. If you want to acknowledge help that you received from your lab mates, you can do so in an acknowledgements paragraph at the bottom of the poster. (At **professional** conferences, the emphasis is on the *science*, and so there is less concern over who is or is not co-author – as long as they all contributed to the work. However, there are guidelines by professional societies that help co-authors decide about the order in which they should list themselves.)

If the poster will be judged for a prize, you may consider reducing your co-author list to just yourself and your sponsor unless you and someone else were equally responsible for the research design, data collection, interpretation, and assembly of the poster. If a graduate student was involved in the project and appears as a co-author, you may want to make sure that in your oral presentation of your poster to the judge, you identify clearly your personal contribution to the project.

For the 2008 EEB Research Symposium, the judges will evaluate your poster for its all-over competitive impact, rather than the detailed areas listed for the 2007 Symposium. Nevertheless, the following points may still be relevant to your poster:

- How clearly does the poster articulate your research questions and hypotheses (i.e., they should be clearly stated)?
- Your methods section should incorporate appropriate controls and comparison groups, if these are relevant to your study
- Are your interpretations of results logically correct and clearly explained?
- Do your conclusions answer your original questions and/or suggest future directions for your research?
- Is the appearance of your poster visually appealing?
- Your poster will be evaluated alone, without any oral presentation on your part. However, one or more judges may ask you for clarification and their overall evaluation may consider your responses.