Guidelines for Organizing a Successful TMS Symposium

To assist you in developing a symposium with the greatest potential impact, the TMS Programming Committee offers the following recommendations. These are based on best practices and support the programming modifications that TMS has introduced in recent years to make the Annual Meeting as productive and enriching as possible.

Stage 1: From Concept to Call for Abstracts

- **Start early.** While some 'hot topics' only germinate a year before the conference, most symposium ideas can be developed two or more years in advance. This allows them to be discussed to build better coherence in the program.

- **Communicate your idea**. Identify relevant technical committees (see program book or TMS website). Attend each committee's meetings and discuss your idea. There may be other similar ideas on the table. Be prepared to merge ideas or delay to a later conference. When potential overlap exists, clearly differentiate or organize joint sessions.

- **A clear, concise, differentiating symposium title is crucial**. The first word of the title should be most important, e.g. "Fracture: Measurement Principles." Use the title to differentiate from similar symposium topics.

- **Enter the symposium on the TMS ProgramMaster website**. To further facilitate communication and coherent programming, upload an idea as soon as possible. Upload at the idea stage and finalize after committee approval.

Stage 2: Reviewing Submitted Abstracts

- **Optimize the coherency of your sessions**. Please help improve the quality of the TMS Annual Meeting by being selective about content. Identify talks that are off-topic and either reject or move them to a symposium that better aligns with their content.

- **Downselect multiple talks from the same group**. If there are multiple abstracts from the same group, consider choosing only one for a talk, either based on abstract content or by asking the group leader which talk is preferred.

- **Coordinate joint sessions** with other symposia that cover related topics.

- **Give students a chance**. Allocate some talk slots to students or early career professionals.

Stage 3: Organizing Coherent Sessions

- **Adhere to Session Start and Stop Times**. 8:30 a.m. to noon for morning sessions; 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for afternoon sessions. Schedule coffee breaks sometime between 9:50 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 3:40 p.m.

- **Maintain a minimum talk time of 20 minutes**. Per TMS programming policy, the minimum presentation slot duration is 20 minutes. Note that 40-minute slots should be reserved for keynote or high-level invited talks. Maximum number of talks per day (assuming all are 20 minutes) is 19 to 20.

- **Distribute keynote and invited talks throughout your symposium.** Start or end later sessions with invited talks.

- **Consider Panel Discussions to draw more dialogue.** You can invite panelists and discussion leaders.

- **Consider a "Poster Preview" slot during the oral presentations.** Ask each poster presenter to give a 1-slide, 3-minute summary of their poster during the oral session. This helps connect the oral sessions to the poster session.

- **Grow your poster session**. Improve program quality by appropriately assigning oral and poster presentations. TMS is building a vibrant poster culture. Some work is better presented one-on-one in a poster presentation.

- **Set an example.** Consider having your own research group submit appropriate contributions as poster presentations.

Stage 4: Just Before and During the Conference.

- **Confirm attendance prior to the conference**. Send an e-mail confirming that the speakers will indeed attend. Communicate drop-outs or no-shows to TMS staff.

- **Backfill.** Replace holes in the program due to drop-outs/no-shows with other speakers, e.g. poster presenters.

- **Attend your symposium.** At least one organizer should always be present to address issues and show support.

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