

To: Hosts of Colloquium speakers

From: Doug Futuyma

Subject: HOSTING COLLOQUIUM SPEAKERS

Date: August 25, 2005, amended September 30, 2005

Here are guidelines that occur to me about what you should do if you agreed to host a speaker.

1. **Communicate with him/her about travel arrangements:** what are their flight plans (arrival, departure times, flight numbers, airport). Offer to help find economical fares. Urge them to fly into **Islip** if possible. **BE SURE** that they confirm a flight **more than 21 days ahead** of travel; otherwise, fares increase considerably. Before they purchase ticket, please check to be sure they have found a **reasonable fare**. **THIS IS IMPORTANT!!**
2. Arrange for **pickup** and **dropoff** at airport or railroad station. (I have sent all speakers information on getting here by air, railroad, or driving.)
3. Get **title** of the talk at least two weeks ahead; ask speaker who he/she would like to meet in particular.
4. **At least two weeks ahead**, provide Martha with speaker's affiliation/position and talk title, for advertisement. Post abstract of the talk, and perhaps citations of a couple of relevant papers.
5. **At least two weeks ahead**, be sure **lodging** has been arranged. That might mean Three Village Inn, Mike Bell's home (Mike has generously volunteered to house speakers), or your own home. Ask speaker what he/she would prefer.
6. **At least 3 days ahead**, develop a schedule for visit: who meets speaker, who has lunch, breakfast, etc. **Actively** sign people up, to be sure the schedule doesn't have huge embarrassing gaps, and to be sure that students who would profit from talking with speaker do so.
7. Determine whether **post-seminar program** consists of a pizza dinner at someone's house, followed by open house/reception, OR dinner at restaurant with a few faculty and students, followed by open house/reception. **Ask speaker ahead of time which he/she prefers**. Note the pros and cons of the pizza dinner: it is a less relaxed and less elegant way of dining (and some speakers might feel they aren't being rewarded with high hospitality), but it is effective at getting graduate students to interact with speaker. **Seek out a couple of faculty before the seminar and obtain commitments to attend the evening reception**.
8. Arrange with a **graduate student** or **postdoc** to serve as "munchie monitor," which includes several aspects of helping to host visitor.
9. Be sure you know and provide exactly what the speaker needs for **visual aid**. If he/she brings own laptop, you need to know that it is compatible with our system. The "Munchie Monitor" guidelines contain instructions about what is needed to set up for visual aids.

10. When you introduce the speaker to the audience, please provide a **dignified, informative introduction**. I don't think I'm alone in feeling offended if the person introducing me is perfunctory, or unprepared, or doesn't say one or two things about my affiliation and past activities, or doesn't know the title of my talk. When I introduce speakers, I almost always write down the main points of the introduction, including the title. I usually ask the speaker if there are particular points he/she would like me to mention. Often, they (as do I) will volunteer one or two things that they would like the audience to know about them. Inquiring is particularly important if you haven't seen their CV or web site; then you will want to ask where they got their degrees, what institutions they have been at, etc. If they have received particular honors (e.g., been a society officer) or have other noteworthy accomplishments, they will often appreciate your mentioning them.
11. Please inform the audience of **post-seminar events** in an organized way. If it is pizza at someone's house, say when people would arrive if they intend to partake in the meal (i.e. in time to order it), and when people should arrive if they intend to come to the postprandial reception only. If there is to be a restaurant dinner, **ask the speaker his/her preference** and determine where it will be, BEFORE the seminar, and line up who will be at the dinner. If you issue a public invitation to join the dinner group, please say where and when the dinner will be, and that they should inform you immediately after the seminar that they will join the dinner party. I think that "meeting at the elevators," much less deciding then and there where to go, signals insufficient respect to the speaker. Speakers appreciate indications that their hosts have thought carefully about the program and what would please the guest, and appreciate being consulted on some of the options.