



Biology Seminar Series Policies

Approval, Scheduling, and Budget Information

Last Updated May 2022

The Department of Biology is invested in hosting visitors engaged in innovative research in the biological sciences, and those who support collaborative opportunities with department members, through seminar presentations and interactions with department members. To this end, we designate a set budget at the start of each academic year for the Biology Seminar Series. The Department of Biology will maintain a Seminar Committee composed of faculty and student members to oversee the annual seminar series. The following describes procedures for approval, scheduling, and funding the Biology Seminar Series for both outside speakers and USU employee presentations.

SEMINAR COMMITTEE

Service on the Seminar Committee is solicited by the department head. Faculty members serve for three years and one year of those is as the chair. Graduate students serve for one year (or up to two years, if reappointed). Meetings are held as needed at the discretion of the committee chair.

BUDGET

Each year, the department designates an annual budget for the seminar series (fall and spring semesters). The budget for the upcoming academic year Biology Seminar Series is determined by the department head and the senior business manager to ensure it meets departmental guidelines and available funds. After approval by the head, the senior business manager then notifies the seminar committee chair and business assistant with the approved annual seminar series budget.

In late spring or summer, at an appropriate time before or during seminar scheduling, the seminar committee chair meets with the senior business manager to develop the allotted budget amount for each speaker, based on the approved annual budget (see *Scheduling and Expenses*, below). The seminar committee chair should relay these budget items to the host PRIOR TO the travel scheduling process. Amounts that exceed the individual speaker budget will be the responsibility of the host.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Before the beginning of the fall semester, the seminar committee meets to select the seminar day and time for the coming academic year. The seminars have been scheduled on Tuesdays at 3:30 pm in recent years to avoid conflict with other department and unit seminars and meetings. The chair then seeks approval of the suggested day/time from the department head. The chair should also discuss with the head whether the Seminar Series will be a for-credit USU class. If the seminars will be a for-credit course, a minimum of 10 seminars should be scheduled for each term to provide enrolled students with adequate experiences upon which to base a grade.

SPEAKER SELECTION

All seminars must be approved and scheduled through the seminar committee.

Nominations: In summer and early fall, the chair of the seminar committee sends an email (via the biology office main assistant) to solicit speaker nominations from department faculty, research and extension staff, and graduate students for the coming year. In the solicitation email, the chair should include all host responsibilities to maintain full transparency of guidelines to nominating members (see *Host Responsibilities*, below).

Nominee names may be sent directly to the committee chair, or added to a shared document (created by the committee chair) such as a Google spreadsheet. Speaker nominations can be non-USU (academic, non-profits, state agencies, etc.) or from any USU department including Biology. They can be faculty, post-docs, research/extension associates, graduate students, etc. Within the Department of Biology, other considerations are:

- *Review:* USU faculty may present seminars for the purpose of the third-year annual review, tenure and/or promotion review, post-tenure review, or sharing of their research. In addition, speakers may present seminars for consideration of an adjunct appointment in the department.
- *Graduate students:* Students are encouraged to present their research in the seminar series. Timely student practice presentations may include preparation for a conference, supervisory committee meeting, or defense.

By August 1, the seminar committee reviews the nominations and selects those to include in the schedule. Selections and numbers of travelling speakers are made based on funding allocations via the meeting between the chair and senior business manager (see *Budget*). The committee should also consider extra expenses with long-distance air travel.

If a nominating member is selected to invite a host, they must then sign the “Host Responsibilities Contract” (provided by the seminar chair and/or senior business manager) and return it to the committee chair. If the nominating member is unwilling or unable to meet the host responsibilities, their speaker nomination will not be considered.

Invitation of Speakers: After speaker selections, the Seminar Committee chair asks all prospective hosts to invite their nominated speaker(s). If the prospective host is a graduate student, the committee chair must ask the student to get approval of their faculty advisor to support the invitation and oversee adherence to the Biology Seminar Series Policies before inviting the speaker. The speaker host is responsible for all aspects of the speaker’s visit.

For Department of Biology speakers, unless otherwise noted, the USU faculty member’s committee chair or department head will be the host, the postdoc’s supervisor will be the host, and the graduate student’s advisor will be the host.

Once a semester schedule is created, either the Seminar Committee chair or Biology office should send the details (speaker name, title, date) to Joe Shope to upload to the Biology website.

HOST RESPONSIBILITIES AND INSTRUCTIONS

An abbreviated version of the content below is provided in the additional document, “Host Responsibilities Contract.”

Before inviting a speaker, the host have signed and returned the contract which will indicate their awareness of all responsibilities and budget requirements. If the host is a graduate student, the major advisor should also be aware and oversee that duties are carried out.

One Month or More Ahead:

If flight travel is involved, the host will work with the business assistant for scheduling the speaker’s travel. The host should gather and then provide the following information about the invited speaker to the business assistant, who will then create an A#, TA, and purchase the flight:

- Full legal name of speaker (as it appears on ID)
- Date of birth
- Home address
- Cell phone number and Preferred email address
- Link or pdf of requested flight itinerary including rewards or SkyMiles number (if desired)

Note that if reimbursement for meals, mileage, and parking is needed for the speaker, the business assistant will need to set up direct deposit information for the speaker.

Obtain a head-shot or action photo of the speaker and email it, along with the speaker's position title, affiliation, seminar title, and a brief description of the seminar content to the administrative assistant (and cc the committee chair) to ensure a flyer is created. (The administrative assistant maintains a Box folder called "Seminars" of all flyers and other docs, and the chair can be added to access that folder to make flyer edits as needed.)

One Week or More Ahead:

For non-USU speakers, coordinate a schedule of one-on-one meetings with interested department or campus employees. This can be done by setting up an online form and sending the link to the administrative assistant to email out to the department. Confirm all scheduled appointments.

Communicate with the speaker:

- Inquire about needs for special accommodations
- Request speakers bring their presentation on a USB drive (to avoid tech issues)
- Inform speaker of seminar length (typically 45-50 minutes, which will allow time for questions)
- Obtain a speaker bio

Coordinate with the administrative assistant to:

- Ensure seminar flyer is emailed and/or posted to faculty and all Departments in the College of Science and others as deemed appropriate (QCNR, Ecology Center, NDFS, Psychology, AgSci, etc.).
- Determine whether more refreshments need to be purchased. The department provides coffee, tea, cups, napkins, etc. It is up to the host to purchase food items within the budgeted amount, if desired. Contact the business assistant to obtain a p-card.
- Obtain parking validation(s) to give to speakers that are driving to campus.

For a non-USU speaker, make arrangements or reservation for meals and invite guests (if desired). Note that the department cannot pay for alcohol (alcohol purchase is the responsibility of the host or individual participants). All meals must be paid for using the department p-card (see business assistant). The host must get a signed, itemized receipt for each meal (including tip) and submit it through Service Now, with "Meals and Entertainment" selected as the receipt classification. Meal costs on the p-card may not exceed the allotted meal budget.

If desired, plan a lunch with graduate students.

- Contact graduate students to sign up for the lunch, ideally those in a similar field of study as the speaker.
- Assign a host for the graduate student lunch to be responsible to pick up/return a p-card from the business assistant.
- Graduate student lunches are typically composed of 4 to 6 students and the speaker, and held on-campus (e.g., in one of the Biology conference rooms) or at a nearby restaurant.

A Few Days Ahead and Day of the Seminar:

- Contact the administrative assistant to ensure that the designated seminar room is reserved and a Zoom link has been distributed, if desired. On the day of the seminar, the room should be ready 30 min before the presentation. Request IT assistance from Joe Shope or his assistant.
- Introduce the speaker.
- The administrative assistant will help set up and take down the refreshments.

Within One Week after the Seminar:

- Submit receipts through Service Now. Select “Meals and Entertainment” for the receipt classification. A list of meal attendees, including affiliation, is required. Receipts must be itemized and signed by the host.
- Request all travel receipts from speaker.
- Send thank-you note to speaker.

If the speaker was virtual, contact the business assistant to determine if there is an allowance for purchasing a small appreciation gift to mail with the thank-you card. Alternatively, the department may have gifts on-hand (contact the biology administrative assistant if interested in exploring the department swag options).

SCHEDULING AND EXPENSES

The committee chair notifies the host with a budgeted amount for that speaker, and then all travel details are coordinated between the speaker host and the business assistant. The Department of Biology Business Services Team will maintain a spreadsheet of each speaker’s expenses (travel, meals, etc.) for each academic year’s seminar series and will work with the seminar committee chair to ensure that all costs are reasonable and within budget.

Expenses covered by the department for non-USU Speakers

Travel

- Airfare – Rate must be reasonable and must meet USU purchasing and travel policies.
- Speaker’s personal vehicle mileage and airport parking – For driving to, and parking at, the speaker’s originating airport. The business assistant will calculate mileage based on addresses and a signed parking receipt (scanned or photographed) must be emailed to the business assistant.
- Airport Pickup/Dropoff – Reserve a department vehicle from the senior business manager to pick up/drop off speaker at the Salt Lake airport. If a department vehicle is not available or a personal vehicle is more convenient, the driver will be reimbursed for personal vehicle mileage and SLC airport parking. The host may choose to drive, or can find another driver (graduate student, etc.).
- Mileage – For speakers driving to campus (business assistant will calculate based on address).
- On-campus parking space – For speakers driving to campus, parking validations are available through the administrative assistant for parking at the Aggie Terrace or Big Blue Terrace.
- Travel Meals – The speaker may be reimbursed for inexpensive meals during travel, so long as signed, itemized receipts (including tip) are provided and meals stay within the overall speaker budget.

Department Meals

- The senior business manager and committee chair will determine a set amount (see Budget above) for department meals that will be the same for all speakers. This will cover seminar refreshments, a lunch with grad students, a host and speaker dinner and/or a social dinner with the speaker and the host’s grad students and/or additional faculty member.
- If the seminar is presented virtually, the department will cover the cost of a small thank you gift (\$50 or less) from USU Book Store or PDP (using the department p-card), or may have gifts (“swag”) on-hand. *Host may also purchase a gift with personal funds if the desired gift is more than \$50.*

Lodging

- One night at the University Inn - Two nights may be covered if it is necessary based on flight schedule. If there is not room at the University Inn, accommodation can be made at a hotel in town. The host may also supply the accommodations at their home if desired, but will not receive payment for the lodging.

Expenses NOT covered by the department for non-USU Speakers

- Per diem – Per diem (a fixed daily rate) will not be provided to invited speakers.
- Guest travel – Airfare, meals, lodging, or any other expense incurred by the speaker bringing a guest.
- Expenses which exceed the individual speaker budget.
- Meals purchased using personal money for which the host requests reimbursement (use a p-card).
- Food delivery costs – These include fees and delivery costs from Door Dash, Uber Eats, etc.
- Airport shuttle (see Host Responsibilities), unless previously approved by senior business manager.

Expenses covered by the department for USU Speakers:

- Seminar refreshments.
- Graduate student lunch with speaker (no more than 4 to 6 students + speaker).