

TOS Meetings: Forefront Format and Partners

When The Oceanography Society (TOS) was conceived and made a reality one major purpose desired by the members was for TOS to have a meeting outlet for the oceanographic community that provided significant presentations of timely subjects impacting our entire field (scientific, industrial, policy and educational). In addition, the members wanted the society to ensure that the shorter presentations would be provided and discussed in a setting that is conducive to an open and even lengthy discussion, and that time was available to hold side meetings and workshops on special topics. These desires by its members led TOS to a unique, member-inspired meeting format of having plenary sessions with 30-minute talks, with no co-occurring sessions, and significant poster sessions and workshops at a different time, where the presenters have the opportunity to discuss unhurriedly their thoughts and ideas with colleagues and many leaders in the field, including policy, industrial and educational attendees. In addition, various sponsors and programs make requests for holding special topical sessions and workshops to the Program Committee for that TOS meeting, and if appropriate they are invited.

In 2001 TOS teamed up with Oceanology International Americas (OIA) to sponsor an exhibition and conference in Miami, Florida. The TOS Council believed this teaming could provide substantial benefits to its members and the entire ocean community. This was a correct assessment and the meeting exceeded expectations of OIA and TOS and was a tremendous success. With this success the TOS Council entered into an agreement with OIA for the 2003 OIA/TOS Exhibition and Conference to be held in New Orleans on June 4–6, 2003. TOS is responsible for the conference element and OIA the exhibition and the planning. TOS will maintain the format as given above including plenary sessions, posters and special topical sessions and workshops. Abstracts will be published in an issue of the TOS magazine specifically for this conference. There will be no registration fee for the OIA/TOS Exhibition and Conference. Overall, this teaming is providing TOS members and the entire ocean community more opportunities than have been possible with other society meetings. Mark your calendar and make plans to attend this conference. Encourage and support your students to become involved in TOS and attend the conference.

Over the years many comments have been given to TOS about its format, in particular about having so many posters and not enough presentations. At the same time it is nearly unanimous that all very much like the non-concurrent sessions and the longer, significant presentations. The TOS Council has continued to examine the meeting format and consistently validated the format as the one most appropriate to meet the needs of the society. Other society's formats have numerous, concurrent sessions with short presenta-

tions, but that not only does not meet TOS goals, TOS sees no reason to replicate that format. It is also interesting to note that posters are becoming the predominant medium for providing and initiating scientific and technical exchange at meetings. For example in the 13 August, 2002 *EOS*, the American Geophysical Union (AGU) reported that at its fall meetings, posters now contribute 70% of the input and they believe that percentage will continue to grow.

On a new front the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography (ASLO) approached TOS to jointly sponsor an Ocean Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii on February 15–20, 2004. TOS and ASLO have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for this and future meetings based upon this being truly a joint meeting merging the formats and interests of the two Societies to best represent the member interests of both Societies. This was achieved and there is a joint Program Committee Co-Chaired by Dr. Russ Moll representing ASLO and Dr. Chuck Trees representing TOS for the Hawaii meeting. Both ASLO and TOS believe this represents an integration of meetings for our community unlike any other joint meeting done in the past.

Shortly after ASLO approached TOS to jointly sponsor this meeting, the Ocean Sciences Section of the AGU approached TOS to be a sponsor of their meeting in Portland, Oregon, which was to occur at about the same time. As TOS had agreed to be a joint sponsor of the meeting with ASLO we felt this could not be done. TOS, ASLO, and the Ocean Sciences Section of AGU have remained in contact to see if a truly joint ASLO, TOS, and AGU meeting can be put in place for 2006 and beyond. Your elected TOS Officers and Councilors believe that a truly joint meeting along the lines of the ASLO/TOS MOA and expanded to include AGU would be in the best interests of the community, and will direct TOS staff actions towards this interest. ASLO and has expressed the same view.

TOS is an international society formed to meet the ocean community's long-term needs. It is an exciting and rapidly advancing time for our community and TOS is a vigorous and valuable partner to the ocean community. Make your plans now to attend the meeting in New Orleans June 4–6, 2003. The web site address for meeting information is <http://www.tos.org> and click on TOS-OIA 2003 Conference. Encourage your colleagues to join TOS (application at web site) and attend the meeting. Also mark your calendars now for the February 15–20, 2004 ASLO/TOS Ocean Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii.

(The views expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Naval Research Laboratory.) 

