

FOR MODERATORS ONLY

This document provides some guidelines and tips for program participants who are assigned to be moderators. As the moderator, you can help make your program item focused and fun! (Note that the nameplates for your panel will be in a folder in the program room.)

Before the Panel

- While moderators are usually chosen from among the participants of a program item, sometimes they are on the panel solely to keep it running smoothly. Please check with Program Operations if you're not sure which role you are fulfilling.
- Prepare some questions/ topics in advance to keep the panel going if conversation lags.
- Meet briefly with the other panelists in the Green Room to talk about a general approach for the panel and a mutual understanding of the topic. (Don't get too detailed or you risk losing spontaneity.)
- Urge panelists not to interact with social media such as Facebook or Twitter during the panel unless such activity is related to the panel's topic.
- If you plan to have panelists introduce themselves, discourage "show and tell" of an author's published works. Let panelists know ahead of time that they should only very briefly refer to their current or total published work, especially if it is not directly relevant to the panel's topic.

During the Panel

- As the panel is about to begin, ask people to please set their mobile phones to silent or to shut them off.
- Start the panel after you are sure that a substantial number of the audience are in place.
- Introduce the panelists or have them introduce themselves, perhaps asking them to relate (briefly!) their interest in or experience with the topic. Be kind but firm in cutting off a lengthy introduction.
- Briefly outline the topic of the panel for the audience.
- Make sure all panelists get a fair chance to speak. This might involve drawing out a quiet panelist, or occasionally cutting off a garrulous one for the good of the panel. (Try humor first, confrontation last.)
- Unless the topic is going nowhere, prevent the discussion from extensively drifting away from the topic. No matter how interesting a newer topic might be, remember that people have come expecting to hear a discussion of the listed topic.

- Allow time for questions from the audience towards the end of the panel. Don't move to questions too quickly: the panelists are on the program item because they are considered to have some expertise or interest in the topic and to be able to talk about it intelligently or amusingly (or both!)
 - Consider announcing near the start of the panel that you will take questions after a specific time.
 - Don't let individual audience questioners monopolize the panel. (Again, this might involve cutting people off but is for the good of the panel).
 - When calling on people in the audience, use identifiers like clothing or hair color and avoid gender identification or pronouns (for example, "the person near the back in the red shirt").
 - If the room is large, repeat the question for the audience.
- If there are nearly as many people in the audience as on the podium, make sure that you are covering topics that the audience wants to hear about. Ask them.

Logistics

- Please don't add anyone to the panel without confirming the addition with Program Operations (even if the person swears it's ok).
- Keep an eye on the time and consider asking a "summing up" question toward the end of the panel. Bring the panel gracefully to a close once your friendly neighborhood Program Operations volunteer flashes the "5 MINUTES" sign, and please be finished completely by the time s/he returns with the STOP sign.
- Please don't linger after the panel, and discourage other panelists from doing so, so that the next panel can start on time. If people want to communicate with the panelists, encourage them to do so outside.

Being a moderator can be a bit daunting but it is usually also rewarding. Thank you for your willingness to take on this responsibility and we hope you enjoy the experience!