2010 Fall Meeting Outstanding Student Paper Awards

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING

1. The goal should be to recognize the **student**, not the advisor or the drafting department. It is not usually possible to distinguish how many of the ideas are those of the student alone, so it is best to try not to judge the science as a dominant criterion. It is also difficult to compare different types of science. (For instance, is a field program "better" than a theoretical model?)

2. Evaluation of the presentation (oral and poster) should be based on criteria such as timing, clarity of expression, effective use of illustrations, organization, and logic. All of these are primarily or completely under the control of the student. Judges might want to use different criteria for talks than for posters, or attempt to use one set of standards for both. Things to include might be:

Presentation

Oral Presentation. Should be audible from rear of room, with reasonably clear enunciation and absence of "um," "er," "you know," etc. (some concession could be made for nervousness and for those who are not native English-speakers, but not too much). Time should be used effectively. The introduction should not take half the time with results rushed in the last minutes. Points should be deducted for running more than a minute over maximum time and extra credit may be given if the talk ends early with time for questions. The student should have practiced the presentation often enough to ensure appropriate timing, so there is no excuse for running over. Slides/view graphs should be legible from the back of room, labeled well and not crowded. The main point of the figure should be obvious without excessive explanation. There should not be too many slides. Large data tables, or multiple graphs on one figure, are possible reasons to downgrade an oral presentation. The student should be able to handle any questions following their oral presentation with poise, understand the points of the questions, and be able to make honest attempts to answer them.

Poster Presentation. Students should speak clearly. They should tell the visitor to the poster enough to explain any item, without going into excessive detail (unless specifically asked for it). The student should explain the poster logically, starting with background and going on to results and conclusions. The figures should be neat and legible. The poster should be logically arranged, rather than a jumble of figures in disarray. The title should be easily legible from 10 feet away and there should be an abstract or some short summary for those visitors to the poster who just want to read. Evaluation points should be deducted for too much or not enough text. There should be some sort of summary diagram or list of conclusions. The figures should be designed to be informative in a poster context, not just copies of something for publication. Extra credit might be given for eye-

catching set-up and use of color. Students should be able to conduct the poster presentation fully by themselves and points should be deducted if he/she turns to the advisor for help. If the advisor attempts to take over, the judge should continue to address any questions to the student.

Content

Oral Presentation. The arrangement should be logical and should explain the problem to be addressed, describe methods (briefly), present result, and draw explicit conclusions. Points should be deducted for diverging into unnecessary details. The purpose of the study should be clear, not just a description of data. At least one conclusion should be reached and substantiated by the data. Although it may be difficult, judges should try to assess whether the student understands the significance of the work or is simply quoting his/her advisor. The study may not be of vital importance, but should be elegant and contribute something new to the field, such as: useful new data, a new model or a test of an old model. There should be evidence of familiarity with the literature and work of others.

Poster Presentation. Same criteria as noted above. The data should be presented in enough detail to support conclusions. A few results that demonstrate the trend are better than trying to show every piece of data. Either verbally or visually, there should be a statement of the problem and of the conclusions. With a poster, it is sometimes easier to determine whether the student understands the concepts of the research.