

## **Access Guidelines for ASLE Biennial Conferences**

ASLE is committed to making arrangements that allow all members of the association, including those with permanent or temporary disabilities, to participate in the biennial conference. ASLE recognizes accessibility as a collaborative and continuing process for which all ASLE members have a responsibility. Therefore, ASLE requests that all panel chairs disseminate these guidelines to presenters far in advance of the conference and ensure that the guidelines are observed during the panel.

ASLE envisions these guidelines as part of an open dialogue. We are committed to improving these guidelines to increase conference accessibility, including accessibility for those with environmental illness and invisible disabilities. We encourage you to be in contact with the ASLE Diversity Officer to communicate suggestions or ideas for improving conference accessibility.

### **Conference Setup**

- Conference organizers should consider the accessibility of locations for conference events, especially receptions and keynote addresses.
- Conference organizers should arrange ASL interpreters for keynotes and plenaries. The Executive Council of ASLE should assist conference organizers in funding interpreters and/or in reducing the costs of interpretation.
- Field trip organizers should consider whether field trips can be made accessible. Field trips accessibility should be addressed in conference materials. Conference organizers should ensure that at least one field trip is offered that can be made accessible.
- Conference organizers should consider the potential that conference participants may have food allergies and/or food sensitivities. Food at sponsored conference events should be labelled for potential allergens and conference materials should make clear whether food accommodations can be made.
- Conference organizers should ensure the availability of gender-neutral bathrooms and identify their locations in the conference materials.

### **Room Setup**

- Conference organizers should arrange for space to be left for two wheelchairs in each meeting room. Space should be left around the doors and aisles to allow access.
- Session chairs should ensure that this area and aisles are kept clear for persons who may be using wheelchairs, canes, crutches, or motorized vehicles.
- Presenters should be aware of the location of interpreters and attempt to keep this line of vision clear as people who are deaf or hard of hearing and who use sign language interpreters or read lips need to sit where they can see both the presenter and the interpreter. The interpreter may stand close to the presenter or within a direct line of sight to allow the audience to view both the presenter and the interpreter.

## **Papers, Handouts, and Audiovisuals**

- Participants should bring three copies of their presentations, even in draft form, for the use of members who wish or need to follow a written text. ASLE requests that these copies of the presentations be printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.
- Participants who use handouts should prepare three copies in large-print format (boldface 14- to 16-point font size) and briefly describe or read all handouts or visual aids to the audience at an appropriate time during the presentation. Avoid colored papers. Participants should indicate whether they want their documents returned.
- Presenters should consider the possibility that persons in the audience may be blind.
- Allow ample time when referring to a visual aid or handout or when pointing out the location of materials.
- When presenters are not using a projector, the session organizer or chair should turn it off. This reduces background noise and helps focus audience attention on the presenter.

## **Communication and Presentation**

- At the start of each session, the panel chair should read the following brief statement, “ASLE is committed to making arrangements that allow all members of the association to participate in the biennial conference. As a reminder, space should be left around doors and aisles to allow access. Additionally, please keep the line of sight between the audience and presenters clear for those who may need to read lips. Copies of each presentation in written form are available.”
- Speak clearly and distinctly, but do not shout.
- Use regular speed unless asked to slow down by members of the audience, sign interpreters, or persons using real-time captioning.
- Make eye contact with the audience and avoid monotone and/or rushed speech, which can make it difficult for many people to absorb the ideas in a presentation.
- Use a microphone when provided. Microphones should be held at a distance from the mouth such that it will pick up your voice while not muffling the sound.
- Do not communicate key information solely in gesture or visual reference.
- Avoid speaking from a darkened area of the room.
- Avoid turning away from the audience while speaking.
- Some people read lips, so the audience should have a direct and clear view of the speaker's mouth and face.
- Eye contact and comments should be directed to the person who is deaf and not to the sign language interpreter.
- Comments should be addressed directly to participants with disabilities and not to their companions.
- Allow ample time for questions and answers.
- Because microphones often fail to pick up voices in the audience, the chair should always repeat questions or statements made by members of the audience.
- In Q&A or discussions, only one person should speak at a time, and speakers should identify themselves so that audience members will know who is talking.

- ASLE permits the taping/recording of presentations for reasons of accessibility. Those presenters who wish to not be recorded/taped must communicate this to the audience ahead of time.
- Conference participants should refrain from wearing perfumes or scented products as scented products may contain chemicals which can cause problems for people with asthma, allergies, and environmental illness.

By adhering to these accessibility guidelines, chairs, presenters, and session organizers demonstrate their commitment to ASLE's mission. This mission includes reaching across national, disciplinary, and cultural boundaries to enhance diversity and inclusiveness. See ASLE's complete bylaws and mission statement on the website ([www.asle.org](http://www.asle.org)).

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, please write or call: [info@asle.org](mailto:info@asle.org), 603-357-7411.