

# SWS PROGRAM COMMITTEE

## GUIDE FOR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSANTS

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a discussant for [NAME OF ROUNDTABLE SESSION]. In the spirit of feminist collaboration and growth, the Program Committee created a short guide for discussants as they prepare for the Winter Meeting.

### *PART I: Before session (via email or before the session starts)*

#### A. CONFIRM THE NAMES AND PRONOUNS OF THE PRESENTERS.

- I. You can make phonetic notes if you wish. If you mess up a name or pronoun, it is okay! **Don't take up time to apologize profusely or joke about how difficult the name was and/or some form of self-deprecating humor.** Just correct yourself smoothly and continue talking. If you realize that you've messed up and the person has already started, you can make a note to correct yourself when opening up the Q/A portion.
  - An example of how to correct yourself in the moment:
    - (a) "They, excuse me, HE, will presenting [TITLE OF PRESENTATION]."
  - Examples of how to correct later, without making a big deal of your mistake:
    - (a) "Thank you [PERSON'S NAME CORRECTLY PRONOUNCED], that was great."
    - (b) "PERSON'S NAME" did quite an excellent job, I really appreciated the way that [EMPHASIS ON PRONOUN] relayed their data and findings."

#### B. CONFIRM THE ORDER IN WHICH FOLKS WILL PRESENT

- I. Usually, this is the order listed in the program, but can be changed if the group of presenters all wish to alter the order.
- II. It is helpful to take the decision (gently), as the presenters are probably preoccupied with their upcoming research talk

#### C. TELL PRESENTERS HOW YOU WILL MANAGE TIME & Q/A

- I. The Program Committee may be able to provide simple notecards indicating time left (usually 10, 5, 2, TIME UP). You should receive this when you register.
  - If notecards will be used, explain each to the presenters, confirm they understand.
  - If presenters would like to time themselves, still keep the 2-minute, TIME UP cards handy.

### *PART II: At start of session (at table)*

#### A. LET TABLE FILL UP, PRESENTERS RELAX INTO SESSION

- I. Try not to rush the starting time, often there is plenty of time left in roundtable presentations.

- Just make a note to remember when the presentations start so that you can keep time in an orderly fashion.
- II. To make it a more relaxed setting, you could ask how people are enjoying the conference, their names, if they've ever been to [CITY], etc.

## B. INTRODUCE SELF

- I. Your self-introduction should be brief.
- II. Try to limit this to the following:
  - Your name
  - Affiliation
  - Your excitement to be the discussant for [TITLE OF ROUNDTABLE]

## C. RE-ANNOUNCE HOW THE SESSION IS ORGANIZED

- I. After confirming order with presenters, reiterate the order of presentations and the time set aside for Q/A at the end.
  - An example of this:
    - "To facilitate the presentations, we will go by the order listed in the program. Each person will speak for about "X" minutes. After everyone finishes, we will open up for discussion. Now, I am pleased to have "PERSON'S NAME" start our roundtable session with their work "TITLE OF SUBMISSION".

## *PART III: During session*

### A. KEEP TRACK OF TIME

- I. Be gentle but firm in managing time. This is for everyone's benefit.
  - If you notice that someone goes over time, make sure to eye-contact and smile, while indicating that it's time to wrap up.
  - Try not to directly interrupt a thought, unless time is drastically needed for another presentation.
  - At the end of presentations, clearly state how much time is left in the session.

### B. MAKE NOTES DURING PRESENTATIONS

- I. Feel free to make short written comments about each presentation in your own notebook/program
  - These may be related to major ideas or interventions, or questions/comments you would think they should expand on more
  - Think about the similarities each paper has with the other presentations at the table, and the differences
    - These may be scalar, methodological, theoretical, epistemological in nature
- II. Use these musings for Q/A in times of awkward silence; or, if there is time left over after everyone gets a chance to speak.

*PART IV: Tips for Q/A Portion:*

A. BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHT THE OFFERINGS EACH PERSON HAS GIVEN

I. **NOTE: This is different than what you hoped they said or what other folks have said that they said**

II. Some suggestions for questions/comments to make as a discussant:

- Methodological, theoretical, or epistemological inspirations for the project;
- The impact they hope to have with the project
- To whom and what they are speaking to with this work
- How they expect to expand the project going forward
- Make a question that overlaps with all the presentations, that each person could take time to answer

B. MAKING SPACE FOR CONVERSATION

I. Try to make space for all attendees to talk (presenters and folks who visit the table).

- Since these are informal roundtables, a gesture or head nod could suffice when organizing the order of multiple folks who would like to speak
- Ask your own questions last or when there is a pause in conversation

II. If there is one person who starts to command the conversation in a less-than-equitable way, gently re-orient the table back to the presentations or topic at hand.

- Favorite phrases for these types of moments
  - "I really appreciate how this perspective makes us think about [NAME of PRESENTER]'s work, [PRESENTER] would you or any other person like to add to this?"
  - "Thank you for adding that, before we dive in, does anyone else have something to add?"
  - "That is a thought-provoking question, it related to [ANOTHER TOPIC]. What does everyone else think of [NEW TOPIC]?"

C. CLOSING THE SESSION

I. Thank the presenters and attendees

II. Encourage sharing of contact information

III. Point out the upcoming sessions or committee meetings

IV. See you next time!