

Meeting Mentoring

Mentoring students or junior scientists is an important part of capacity building. Mentoring by an experienced scientist at scientific meetings can greatly enhance the meeting experience for a student or young scientist, and introduce them to an important part of a scientific career. Best practices assure positive outcomes for the meeting experience for the student. Consider some of the following activities that have proven to be beneficial in the mentoring process:

- The mentor should contact the “mentee” prior to the meeting via email for initial introductions and to arrange an initial meeting at the meeting.
- At the initial meeting, get to know them, and go over the meeting agenda. Decide on times when you will meet, and select papers that you will both hear and later discuss.
- Mentors should plan to spend some time with the students almost every day of the meeting. It is important to make very formal arrangements as to where and when you will meet, because casual approaches often fail. Spend some time in sessions sitting with them. In the ASLO Multicultural Program, the students are required to critique two talks and two posters and have work-books to facilitate this, and discussion of good and bad papers you have both heard is beneficial in this effort.
- A very important task for the mentor is to introduce the students to your colleagues. It is not easy for the student to break-in to the network, and your help in this regard is essential. Examples include the following:
 - go with them to poster sessions and introduce them to colleagues standing their poster.
 - Learn the scientists that they would like to meet and work to introduce them for discussions.
 - If the student has a talk or poster, be sure to recruit colleagues who might have interest in their topic, and be sure that you hear the talk or visit the poster as well.
 - Spend at least some time with your student at social events in the meeting. This presents a good opportunity to introduce them to a range of scientists and make them feel more comfortable in the meeting.
- Follow-up is likewise important. The student should feel comfortable in communicating with you via email after the meeting.