EURECA Conference Moderator Responsibilities

A. Introducing the speakers

Important elements to consider

- Audience – mixed cultures, backgrounds, specializations, dispositions
- Purpose – to establish credibility of the speaker
- Organization – major sections: educational background, participation in community organizations and extra-curricular activities, awards, research interests, plans for the future

Time connectors and organization indicators

In addition to words like *after, while, then, during*, and *before*, the words *following* and *the following* can function as time connectors in speeches that are organized chronologically.

The following generally precedes a time period, such as *the following* year, month or week.

Following, on the other hand, generally precedes a specific event, such as *following* his job as part time lab technician, his summer internship, graduation, etc.

Beginning your speech

Some openings may be rather formulaic; others more creative.

1. *"Today, I'm happy to introduce you to Mr. _____, who majors in Political Science."*
2. *"I'm pleased to introduce you to a woman who's interested in stones and bones. Ms. _____ studies Geology here at the University and would like to continue her studies at the University of _____."*
3. *"It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Mr. _____."*

In a more casual or collegial academic setting, introduce a person by both his/her first and last name (e.g. Amani Elshimi) and then refer to the person by his/her first name (Amani). In a more formal academic setting, also begin by the person's complete name, then use his or her title (Dr. Elshimi). Avoid referring to the person you introduce as *lady, girl, guy* even in an informal setting. These references are not considered appropriate. Instead use *person*.

To avoid embarrassing the speaker,

1. exclude personal information such as age or marital status
2. *avoid reference to the person's physical attributes – e.g. "The pretty lady I'm going to introduce you to today is _____."*

You may use humor in your speech as long as you keep in mind audience and purpose. Audiences respond to humor, if it is used appropriately.

Concluding your speech

When you conclude your introduction speech, try to end on a positive note. You may rely on formulaic expressions such as,

"So let's please welcome Mr. Ali Atef ...."
"I'm sure we'll all enjoy listening to ......"

Avoid an abrupt ending such as "*So that's all*" or "*I'm done.*"

Gathering information

Gather enough information to enable you to develop a one-minute introduction speech on each of the presenters you will introduce. Use the biographical information to help you, but also get in touch with the person(s) you will be introducing (via their contact email) and collect other information that might be interesting. Write a list of questions to help you before you get in touch with the person and, perhaps, share your speech with them before the conference to see if they would like to add or delete any information.

Pausing and speed

During their speeches, some presenters speak too slowly and haltingly, while others speak too quickly. Both of these problems can be helped with proper pausing.

When presenters pause too much, they seem unprepared because their presentations are choppy or hesitant. This may be because they pause after every word or two and also repeat words or parts of words too often.

Presenters who speak too quickly have a tendency to forget to pause at the end of natural word groupings. This puts extra demands on listeners who need time to absorb information.

There are two different types of pausing that give your presentation a good flow:
- You need to come to a complete stop at the end of a sentence
- You need to slow down or linger at the end of word groupings

    E.g. *Adel's major area of interest is in coordinating the activities of the Entrepreneurship Society.* (Complete stop*). After graduation* (slow down), *Adel intends to ....*

The importance of practice

Practice your speech several times orally. Then record your speech and listen to yourself. Notice your pauses, your voice pitch and speed and your clarity of articulation. Make changes and practice again. Make a small note card with your

outline on it. Do not read your speech or memorize it word for word. Instead, refer to your card to help you remember what you are going to say.

B. Keeping Time

As a moderator, you need to keep track of the time as the presenters deliver their presentations. If a presenter goes beyond his/her time limits, you need to remind him/her gently of the time. You may write a note which you pass to the speaker, or you may slide in as the presenter pauses and say something like, *"Please let me remind you of the time, we need to allow time for questions ..."*

C. Coordinating questions

You are required to coordinate the question and answer session at the end. Make sure that you can see how many people have questions and try to politely allocate time for all. If an attendee asks too many questions or takes up too much time in posing a question, gently remind him/her that *"We need to allow time for as many questions as we can"*.

You may collect the questions on slips of paper and give them to the presenters, who may then respond to related questions together or may choose to respond to some but not others.

D. Having access to the room technician

Make sure you have a preliminary understanding of how the AV equipment works so that you can help out if some minor difficulty occurs. Ultimately, make sure you know the whereabouts of the room technician so that you can reach him quickly.

E. Putting the speaker at ease

The speakers are probably more nervous than you are. Maintain a friendly, relaxed mood in order to put them at ease. Your emotional support and pleasant disposition can make the entire session successful. Never panic or display frustration or desperation or boredom so as not to agitate the presenters.