

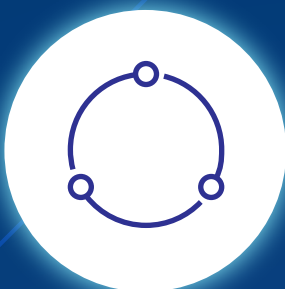
How to Introduce a Speaker in a Scientific Seminar

So...you are a junior scientist who has been asked to introduce the speaker for next week's seminar series. "It's an introduction...how hard can it be!" you think while responding with "I would be happy to do it!"

Though an introduction only lasts a couple of minutes, even experienced faculty members must prepare in order to deliver a clear, concise and appropriate introduction. Lack of preparation leads to introductions that either lack substance (how many times have you heard "Our speaker today needs no introduction") or lists every little detail of the speaker's CV. Delivering a balanced, powerful introduction takes preparation and practice. Here are some tips to guide you.

Short but Powerful

An introduction should strive to accomplish these **three** goals:



Connect

Connect the speaker and the speakers work to this particular audience



Reinforce

Reinforce the speaker's credibility.



Motivate

Motivate the audience to listen.

Write your introduction by following these steps

- 1. Get to know the speaker.** Often all you will have is the speaker's CV and their lab website. Become familiar with the speaker's research. The lab website or faculty web page usually has a one-paragraph summary of the person's research program. Read their CV to understand their background and training. Try to find connections between what you read and the specific audience. Ask the organizers why they invited this speaker.
- 2. Make connection** with the speaker to let them know you'll be introducing them try to get to know them a bit by asking specific questions or find common interests.
- 3. Find a few pieces of relevant information** from exercise #1 above to highlight in your introduction. It could be a particular award or an unusual fact about the speaker (like the fact that they're a musician or that they were a backup dancer in a Madonna video.) Don't be afraid to get personal. If you know the speaker, you can share a personal story or anecdote (without making it about you!)
- 4. Speak slowly** and take time to pause. Though you may have notes with you as reminders, don't read from a paper. Feel free to infuse humor or a personal touch to connect the audience with the speaker. Showcase the human side of the speaker, not just their work.
- 5. Be explicit about the end of your introduction by leaving the speaker's name to the end.** This will prompt applause and ensure a smooth transition between you and the speaker. End with "Please join me in welcoming Dr. _____"