Poster Presenter's Guide
for the 2003 Nanotechnology Scientific Meeting

The purpose of a poster presentation at a professional meeting is the communication of new and innovative information and ideas to colleagues. Poster sessions allow more professionals to present their work at a conference, and allow the audience to determine the speed at which the material is viewed. It also allows for more informal interaction with the presenter, which allows audience members to ask more questions and to engage in in-depth discussions of the materials presented.

Space and Setup Time

Posters at the 2003 Nanotechnology Scientific Meeting will be assigned a 3.5' wide x 4' high display space. <u>Please try to bring a poster no larger than the space available</u>. A limited number of double-wide boards are available but you **must** reserve one in advance by contacting Ellen Stauffer at ellen@ksu.edu. Posters should be set up from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Monday, June 2. Posters must remain in place until Wednesday afternoon, June 4 and must be removed by 5:30 p.m. Posters not removed when the conference adjourns will be thrown away. Poster boards are made of Styrofoam--posters may be mounted with thumb tacks or push pens only. <u>No glue, putty or tape may be used</u>. We will have **some** push pins available but you should plan to bring your own, if possible.

Poster Sessions

Poster viewings will take place at each break during the meeting. In addition, an Opening Reception on Monday night from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. will provide the opportunity for poster presenters to discuss their posters. Please plan to be near your poster that evening so that you are available for discussion and to answer questions.

What Makes a Good Poster Presentation?

Poster Layout

An effective poster requires development of an intellectually organized, concise, structured, and pointed presentation. It means visually arranging the elements to optimize audience understanding, and keeping in mind that the audience, some of whom may be very interested in the information you are presenting, is moving quickly past the display. There should be some open space in the design. White space emphasizes whatever it surrounds, acting as a visual box or border. It is good to use elements of different sizes and proportions. A large and/or bright center of interest such as a photograph, chart, or graph can draw attention to the most important aspect of the poster. A good rule to remember is that less is more. The main tenet of good poster design is simplicity.

Poster Titles

Because the audience tends to move quickly, the poster's main message must be effectively highlighted and easily grasped in a very short time. Titles should be easily read from 10-15 feet away, and the poster should be organized so that there is a logical flow of the information presented (Figure 1). As a general rule, the title lettering should be large, about 2 to 3 inches tall.

Poster Text

Text in the body of an effective technical poster should contain short sentences, to-the-point word choices, simple sentence structures, a moderate or low degree of abstraction, and use common words, not jargon. Choose a very readable text font and style for the poster. Figure 2 shows two very readable and recommended text typefaces for posters. Helvetica is a sans serif type and is a very clear, plain style. Times is a serif type, which has been shown to help guide the eye in reading. Both typefaces work very well for either the title or the body. A type size of at least 18-point is recommended for body text on your poster. Posters may use one type only, or may mix the two, and bold, italic, or bold italic type may be used selectively to emphasize important points.

The text material included on a poster should be extremely brief or most of the audience will walk away. Some authors like to include the full abstract as part of the poster, but they should not rely on its being read. More successful is placement of a succinct statement of major conclusions at the beginning of the poster - perhaps as an expanded subtitle. The supporting text is then presented in brief segments along with appropriate illustrations, and the significance of the findings is made forcefully and concisely clear at the end.

Divide the text into purposeful sections, giving each one a title or heading. Headings allow the viewer to categorize and find information quickly. Section headings can also serve enhance the visual flow of the poster, guiding the viewer easily through the information. For this reason, section headings should be bold, providing a powerful, organizing graphic element. Section headings look very good printed in bold capitals, and a 24-point to 32-point type size should be used.

In addition to type-size, margins are a very important design consideration for reading. Text for a poster should not extend from one edge of the paper to the other, but should have generous margins. Body text for a poster should be upper- and lowercase letters, and left-justified text with a ragged right margin is preferred. This style is m ore readable and presents a less "blocky" or square appearance. Another consideration is line spacing, and a setting of 1.5 is generally preferred.

Using Color

Color is a powerful graphic element and can add strong impact to your poster, but it must be used judiciously. Color should be used with a purpose to emphasize, highlight, or reveal. For technical posters, black type in a white, yellow, or other good contrasting background offers the best visual display. Avoid a background color that is overly dark and minimizes the contrast between type and background. "Negative text," or white text on a black background, may be used effectively for headings in some circumstances, but it is not recommended for body text. Generally speaking, color in a technical poster is most appropriately used in charts and graphs, or photographs. The guiding rule should be to use less color rather than more, using no more than four colors and shadings of those colors if more colors are needed.

Travel and Mounting your Poster

Posters often have to be taken to distant meetings. If you know you will be flying, make sure that the poster elements are small enough to package within the allowed carry-on dimensions (usually 17" x 22") to avoid the panic of lost luggage.

You may have only a short time to set up your poster, so prepare for this in advance. Have a sketch of the poster with the placement of key elements indicated so you know where to place them. Have these items ready in a poster emergency kit: box of clear push pins or thumb tacks, scotch tape, scissors, glue, or whatever supplies may be necessary for repairs in case some disaster should occur. Remember that no glue, putty or tape may be used to mount your poster.