Sample Symposium Proposal for SfN Annual Meeting
(sample text provided with permission by Dr. Lumpkin from actual accepted proposal from previous annual meeting)

Organizers

Ellen A. Lumpkin, Ph.D., Chair
Diana M. Bautista, Ph.D., Co-Chair

Session Title

The Molecules and Cells of Mammalian Touch

Primary Theme

D. Sensory Systems

Secondary Theme

A. Development

Short Description for Program

Provide a brief summary describing the session content. If this proposal is accepted, this summary will be published in the *Program* and online and may be edited for conformity. Session description needs to have "This session will..." statement.
(Limit: 500 characters)

Among the mammalian senses, touch remains the most enigmatic at the molecular level. Our brains distinguish an astonishing assortment of tactile features, such as textures, shapes and vibration, in our surroundings. Touch-sensitive neurons display a corresponding diversity of responses and cellular morphologies. This symposium will highlight recent breakthroughs in our understanding of molecules, labeled lines and circuits that encode touch in the mammalian nervous system.

***Overall Objectives and Event Description**

Please provide three clear, measurable learning objectives for your session. These learning objectives should inform potential participants whether the session is appropriate for them to attend by indicating what knowledge/skills they will obtain from attending your session.

Upon completion of this activity, participants should be able to: (Limit: 250 characters)

Objective 1: Answer long-standing questions: Do distinct molecules transduce force in light-touch and pain receptors? What cell types and circuits subserve different perceptual qualities in tactile discrimination?
Objective 2: Have a further understanding of distinct touch-receptor populations, mammalian species, and *in vivo* and *in vitro* approaches.
Objective 3:

***Timeliness**

Why is the proposed minisymposium timely?
(Limit: 500 characters)

Over 40 years of research has led to a molecular understanding of transduction in vision, olfaction, gustation and thermosensation. By contrast, the basis of mammalian touch reception remains a mystery. In the past two years, breakthroughs in this field have provided molecular tools and tractable systems that set the stage to discover molecules that transduce touch in mammals. The time is ripe to highlight emerging mechanistic insights and advances that are propelling the field forward.

***Appeal**

Describe the extent to which this minisymposium would have a broad appeal for the membership. (Limit: 500 characters)

The major theme – the peripheral mechanisms that encode touch – will appeal to neuroscientists working in diverse sensory systems at all levels, including 1) systems neurobiologists that study the central circuits (*e.g.,* barrel cortex) that process somatosensory inputs, 2) molecular and cellular neuroscientists that seek to understand how signaling mechanisms are conserved across species and sensory systems, and 3) disease-focused researchers interested in mechanisms of touch hypersensitivity.

***Clinical Relevance**

What is the clinical relevance, if any, of the proposed topic? Please state any relevant learning objectives for a clinician or clinician-scientist audience. (Limit: 500 characters)

Touch receptors provide inputs that dictate the proper development and function of the nervous system. For example, cognitive development is stunted in infants that are not adequately touched. Moreover, touch hypersensitivity is a devastating consequence of neurological disorders ranging from Autism Spectrum to chronic pain. This symposium addresses these clinically relevant topics by presenting recent advances in our knowledge of molecules, cells and circuits that encode tactile stimuli.

***Diversity**

Statement on how your participants contribute to diversity in the meeting program (gender diversity, international, individuals with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in neuroscience, individuals with intersectional diversity, etc.).

Appropriate representation of diverse scientists among the presenters is required and will be among the key criteria considered in the selection of minisymposia by the Program Committee. Proposals lacking adequate representation of the diverse and international SfN community are not aligned with our organizational priorities. Special circumstances where it is not possible should be described and will be considered by the committee. (500 characters, including spaces)

The Program Committee retains the right to work with the organizer to modify the composition of the minisymposium to ensure diversity (see Guidelines for Participating in

SfN Events). The Program Committee discourages the inclusion of speakers who have participated in (mini)symposia or featured panel sessions in the past two years. (Participants 2021 & 2022). Members of the Program Committee and SFN Council are also ineligible.

Looking for a speaker? Utilize these resources created by external organizations to identify speakers from diverse backgrounds.

The line-up proposed for this symposium is exceptionally diverse. Our participants represent distinct geographical areas including Germany, Texas, California and the US East Coast. The chair and co-chair, who are also proposed speakers, are women. Finally, one of the speakers is a Latina scientist and is a role model for underrepresented minorities in science.

***Journal of Neuroscience Minireview**

Would you like to be considered for a minireview in *The Journal of Neuroscience*?

Yes

Other Considerations

Please list here any other considerations that make your proposal attractive. (Limit: 1500 characters)

This symposium includes 4 leaders in sensory neurobiology. Dr. Ginty, a top researcher in neural development, will present new work in the field of touch. Dr. Lewin is a widely recognized expert on touch reception. Dr. Lumpkin pioneered the study of mouse Merkel cells a decade ago. Dr. Bautista is a rising star who has received many accolades for her work on molecular nociception. Although she spoke in 2008 on cold sensation, this venue will allow her to debut new findings on touch transduction.

Speakers

Symposium/Minisymposium Speakers

Each Symposium Proposal must list four speakers. Each minisymposium must list six speakers. Each session must have an SfN member as Chair and also has the option for a Co-Chair. Click the People Lookup link to search for people in the SfN database.

Salutation: (Dr./Mr./Ms./Mrs.)
* First Name:
* Last Name:
Suffix (Jr., Sr., III):
*Degree(s) (MD, PhD, n/a):
* Institution:
Department:
* City:
State:
* Country:
* E-mail:
*Presentation Title:

Please use sentence case. (Limit: 150 characters)
*Presentation References:
Please list here one recent, full citation of a published work. (Limit: 300 characters)

Disclosure of Commercial Support for Faculty

SfN requires faculty to identify conflicts of interest in order to ensure that the program is created and executed without bias. Financial contributions from commercial supporters to the work being reported may be perceived as a potential conflict of interest, and should be clearly acknowledged to the audience. Faculty should ensure that no contractual relations or proprietary considerations exist that restrict the dissemination of their findings. It is the responsibility of each faculty member (chair, co-chair, moderator, lecturer, or speaker) to report any financial conflict of interest. If a faculty member indicates that there is a conflict of interest it will be noted next to the published event description directing readers to a list of conflicts.

In general, disclosure is required in any case in which an individual stands to benefit financially from research performed. Similarly, disclosure is required in any instance in which a company stands to benefit financially from any research performed. Consequently, the central criterion of this policy places the onus for disclosure on each faculty member to indicate any benefit to an individual or company that may derive from any and all relationships that may potentially lead to financial reward.

A commercial interest is defined as any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. Providers of clinical service directly to patients are NOT considered to be commercial interests.
Disclosure of spousal information should be included in your disclosure if your spouse or life partner has any relationships to products or devices that will be discussed in your presentation.

CRITERIA FOR DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
Instructors, planners and managers who affect the content of an activity are required to disclose to SfN and meeting participants certain information in order to ensure that the program is created and executed without bias. Any relationships disclosed will be reviewed to ensure that identified conflicts of interest are resolved. Failure to provide disclosure information in a timely manner may result in the disqualification of the potential instructor, planner or manager from the activity or the exclusion of the activity from the meeting.

You must disclose:

Any financial relationships that you have with commercial interest(s) associated with the activity of any amount from the past 12 months ONLY.
Any relationships to products or devices that you have with commercial interest(s) associated with the activity from the past 12 months ONLY.
Any financial relationships your spouse or life partner has with commercial interest(s) associated with the activity, or any relationships that he/she has to products or devices that will be discussed in your presentation.
Any marketing advice or consulting provided by your spouse or life partner to commercial interest(s) associated with the
You do not have to disclose:

501-C non-profit organizations
Government organizations.

Non-healthcare related companies.
Liability insurance providers.
Health insurance providers.
Group medical practices.
For-profit hospitals.
For-profit rehabilitation centers.
For-profit nursing homes.
Blood banks.
Diagnostic laboratories.
Some examples of conflicts of interest are listed below. In no way is this list to be construed as all-encompassing. For more information concerning conflict of interest, please click here to refer to the Guidelines for Responsible Conduct Regarding Scientific Communication.

A. Employment/Salary (full or part-time):
B. Contracted Research/Research Grant (principal investigator for a drug study, collaborator or consultant and pending and current grants). If you are a PI for a drug study, report that research relationship even if those funds come to an institution.
C. Other Research Support (receipt of drugs, supplies, equipment or other in-kind support)
D. Fees for Non-CME Services Received Directly from Commercial Interest or their Agents (e.g., speakers' bureaus)
E. Ownership Interest (stock, stock options, royalty, receipt of intellectual property rights/patent holder, excluding diversified mutual funds)
F. Consulting Fees (e.g., advisory boards)
Other