

Webinar Committee

Attendees: Veronica Bryant (Chair), Kaitlyn Casulli (Vice-Chair), Michael Batz, Armitra Jackson-Davis, Joshua Gurtler, Alvin Lee, Humberto Maldonado, Doug Marshall, Abhinav Mishra, Claire Murphy, Angela Shaw, Purnendu Vasavada.

IAFP Staff Present: Dina Siedenburg, Tamara Ford.

Meeting Called to Order: Sunday, 1:02 p.m. Eastern Time, July 16, 2023.

Old Business: 2022 Minutes Approved (Claire motion, Mike second).

New Business: Reviewed the listing of webinars presented in the last year with attendance and registrations. Most took place toward April-June 2023. Similar webinar pattern as last year; notices of non-acceptance go out and webinars are used as an alternative. We reached out to non-accepted presenters to invite them to submit their ideas as webinars. Managing 200+ responses was not easy; how can we handle it better in the future? Webinar numbers increased, but the total number of attendees decreased in the past year. Registrations: 4,218, Attendees: ~2,000, Views: ~2,500. Views approximately doubled, likely due to the food safety day promotion in June. International Food Protection Issues PDG and Student PDG were our two biggest participants. These were new PDG participants, leadership is likely the reason why we are showing increased attendance from new groups – promotion within the groups. Participation is excellent - ~50%. The physical hazard webinar was heavily attended. Good international presence and relevance. High attendance for fruit and vegetable-related webinars. Dry cleaning webinar, maybe do a part 2. For proposals, make sure the people you ask are serious about participating. Is there technical assistance available? What are FAQs and how can we help people flesh out topics, find speakers, etc.? We don't turn down a lot of proposals. We do direct people to find more diversity (e.g., not only industry, but include academic/government to add perspectives and avoid sales pitches). How can we communicate assistance better for people who are proposing topics? One-on-one assistance for people navigating a submission; this is what the program committee does. Have committee members be the "guides" for submitters and assign based on topic area expertise. Bring back ideas from last year of how to organize and submit a webinar (one-pager or a webinar) where people can ask questions. Encourage more collaboration with PDG especially to vet content questions or to find speakers. A webinar on traceability was proposed and that proposal fell through the cracks; how can we give greater accountability to submissions? Nobody wants to have to submit thing twice. Loop in the chairs to help with managing submission traffic. Issues with trying to find speakers for ideas – students have ideas but they have difficulty knowing how and where to recruit speakers. We don't have content right now regarding webinars with our regular submission forms. We encourage submission but we don't give directions. How can we better delegate webinar approvals to the committee's expertise? We are trying to avoid sales pitches, what expertise can we lean on to ensure this doesn't happen? Get the slides in advance as a check on the content. Send out to chairs of committees to encourage the submission of webinars when programs get rejected.

We have a lot of people who have reached out and we haven't seen a return in terms of increased webinar submissions. Find a way to walk people through more directly; as they come in find people to walk the submitting PDG through the process. Have a mechanism to give people information about the process of developing a webinar. Younger people might have a more difficult time reaching out to find speakers and getting responses, while more well-known people can receive better responses. There is a gap in submissions going to the IAFP staff and then the staff sends to committee chairs. Can we improve this process to have chairs cc'ed on submissions? An in-person program this year got canceled due to visa issues – adapt to be a webinar. No virtual option at the meeting and people can't access travel, promote as a webinar. Try to promote for the fall when webinar numbers are low. Is 50% good enough, and can we increase it? Can we capture who registered but viewed later? Can we understand where the attendees are coming from? Time differences can hinder live participation. Let's continue to promote the free month of viewing. Have two sessions. Record the webinar and have a Q&A session for the two halves of the globe for broader reach. Webinar.com says participation is usually 20% on the low end and 40% is on the high end for average attendance of webinars. Attendees do not have to be members to attend a live webinar. We are not capturing single registration streaming webinars to multiple people in a room. Rapid methods in the lab webinar. Seemed borderline as to whether this was violating commercialization policy (we aren't sure if this was IAFP or another organization). We don't want to kick a webinar out because we think it might be a sales pitch but we need better review for subject matter experts. Get the committee's opinion but maintain a quick turnaround time. Closed captioning is not available on GoToMeeting. Look at other options for webinar platforms; we recommend Zoom. Prioritize topics that would be preferred by members and then invite speakers. This task can fall on committee members to develop webinars. Get help from the Program Committee to help us to understand priorities. PDG leadership can help develop webinars that can be formed from rejected proposals. Chat GPT webinar or other AI topic for a potential future webinar topic.

Board Recommendations:

1. Mechanism to provide submitters with a way to get assistance with webinar submission. We suggest a webinar on webinars, or direction to other written content to aid with submission and a Check box on the submission form to specifically request help in a nearly finished proposal.
2. Consider accessibility for webinars (e.g., closed captioning) and consider changing the platform for webinars to something other than GoToMeeting due to the lack of accessibility features.
3. Receipt of submission of webinar form to inform submitters that their request has been received.
4. Providing increased publicity of IAFP and webinar programming on LinkedIn to help reach an international audience.

Next Meeting Date: Sunday, July 14, 2024.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:26 p.m. Eastern Time.

Chairperson: Kaitlyn Cassuli.