ASSC 11 Meeting Report
Paula Droege¹

OVERVIEW

ASSC-11 took place on June 22-25, 2007 at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting began on Friday, June 22 with an optional day of tutorials, and the main meeting commenced in the evening. The conference website is archived at http://assc2007.neuralcorrelate.com. 251 people registered to attend the meeting, 146 of whom completed the conference survey (58%).² The following report is based on survey results and is written primarily to provide guidance for future conference organizers. As such, the central issue is to determine what went well at the conference and why.

Based on survey results, attendance was very good throughout the meeting. Unfortunately, the results are inadequate in two ways. First, Symposium 3: Cognitive Basis of Intuitions was unintentionally omitted from the survey, so no data is available for this symposium. Second, respondents were not given the option of selecting ‘Did not attend’ for the Magic Symposium, so the 100% attendance rate is likely too high. Nonetheless, this event was clearly the most popular session in terms of attendance as well as overall positive response.

![Attendance Graph]

¹ Correspondence regarding this report can be sent to the author at: pdroege@psu.edu. Thanks to Alumit Ishai who produced the graphs.
² The survey was sent to 226 attendees. 134 of the respondents completed the survey; 12 respondents partially completed the survey.
DEMOGRAPHICS

Of 146 respondents, 77% were ASSC members (41% full, 12% affiliate, and 24% student members). The majority participants (69%) came from two categories: poster presenters (35%) and interested observers (34%), suggesting that these populations should be encouraged to attend future conferences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keynote speaker</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary speaker in a symposium</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker in concurrent session</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenter of a poster</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested observer</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Respondents came from the following disciplines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer scientist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroscientist</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosopher</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of the public</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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As in previous years, neuroscientists and psychologists form the majority of attendees (60%); philosophers form roughly a fourth of the attendees, based on survey response.

ASSC-11 was the first meeting attended by 66 of the respondents (45%). Of the remaining respondents, previous conference attendance is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSC1: Los Angeles (1997)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC2: Bremen (1998)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSC3: London, Ontario (1999)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSC4: Brussels (2000)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSC5: Durham, North Carolina (2001)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSC6: Barcelona (2002)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC7: Memphis (2003)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC8: Antwerp (2004)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC9: Caltech (2005)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC10: Oxford (2006)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 5 multi-disciplinary, 2 psychiatrist, 2 linguist/translation research, 1 education, 1 cognitive scientist, 1 artist, 1 sponsor, 1 writer, 1 physician.
Comments:

* Attendance (251) was similar to previous years (ASSC-10 316, ASSC-8 250), and seems about the right size. Despite negative feedback about the choice of Las Vegas as the conference site, the location does not seem to have affected attendance.
* Given that one third of conference participants are not ASSC members, the conference is a good place to advertise the benefits of membership. Perhaps a brief description of benefits could be included into the Welcome Address or some other part of the program. Flyers noting the website address and membership fees/benefits could be made separately or incorporated into the conference program.

ACADEMIC CONTENT

TUTORIALS

Eight tutorials were held; four in the morning session and four in the afternoon session. Each was three hours long. 146 tutorial attendees paid $70 per tutorial ($60 early registration). An honorarium of $500 was divided equally among presenters. Tutorials presented were:

M1 Hakwan Lau: The scope and limits of brain imaging in consciousness research
M2 Frederique de Vignemont & Roblin Meeks: Representing and misrepresenting the body
M3 John-Dylan Haynes: Reading conscious and unconscious mental states from human brain activity
M4 Russell T. Hurlburt & Eric Schwitzgebel: Can inner experience be faithfully described?
A5 Olivia Carter & Michael Silver: The pharmacology of perception
A6 Dorothée Legrand & Perrine Ruby: What is self-specific? A tutorial questioning the cerebral correlates of the self
A7 Naotsugu Tsuchiya & Christof Koch: The relationship between top-down attention and consciousness
A8 Axel Cleeremans & Morten Overgaard: “Measuring consciousness”: Combining objective and subjective data, and what it may all mean

Tutorial evaluations are presented in two forms. The first table presents total responses in each of 4 rating categories: poor, fair, good, excellent. The second table presents a weighted average of ratings in order to compare tutorials within and between years. These results were determined by converting each response into a score of 1-4. The scores were summed and divided by the number of responses to achieve the weighted average. A score of higher than 3.0 indicates the average ranking is greater than ‘good’ (i.e., there are more responses for ‘excellent’ than ‘fair’ and ‘poor’), whereas a score of less than 3.0 indicates the average evaluation was less than ‘good’ (i.e., there are more responses for ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ than ‘excellent’). While higher scores do indicate a more positive response, it is likely that a score at either extreme of the range is increasingly difficult. An examination of previous years’ scores suggests a practical upper bound of 3.6 and a lower bound of 2.2.

4 Description and evaluation of weighted average from Patrick Wilken’s ASSC10 Report.
Tutorial responses

Number of responses

Weighted average

Lau  de Vignemont & Meeks  Haynes  Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel  Carter & Silver  Legrand & Ruby  Tsuchiya & Koch  Cleeremans & Overgaard

Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent

1  1.5  2  2.5  3  3.5  4

Lau  de Vignemont & Meeks  Haynes  Hurlburt & Schwitzgebel  Carter & Silver  Legrand & Ruby  Tsuchiya & Koch  Cleeremans & Overgaard

1  1.5  2  2.5  3  3.5  4
The tutorials received a very good response overall. de Vignemont & Meeks hit the upper bound of the weighted average (3.6), with five other tutorials very close to the top (Legrand & Ruby and Tsuchiya and Koch (3.5), Lau, Haynes, and Cleeremans & Overgaard (3.4)). Though the other two tutorials (Hulburt & Schwitzgebel and Carter & Silver) received a mixed evaluation (2.9), both received ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ as the majority response.

Value of advance preparation:

- The speaker sending notes before the meeting was useful.
- It would have been good have been able to access papers online before the meeting as was done at Oxford.
- I would like to access the PowerPoint presentation online.

But not too much preparation:

- The tutorial was based really closely on a TICS paper. It didn’t really add too much to that paper. I was hoping for a bit more new empirical work and a bit broader discussion of methods and issues.
- In both cases I had read the paper the tutorial was based on and in only the Koch session was clear about that before hand. I may have changed sessions had I known. The tutorials were an elaboration of the information but not a tutorial per se - there was little practical help in the session, and when asked practical questions about pattern recognition the speakers response was to look at the methods section. Which clearly had been done prior.

Mixed opinions about the level of content:

- de Vignemont and Meeks were exceptional presenters and the information was deep and wide.
- de Vignemont and Meeks workshop did not go that far in presenting new thinking, but was more a review.
- Tsuchiya and Koch were ok. However, the material seemed somewhat haphazard. This made the tutorial hard to follow. At times it was difficult to tell how the data they brought up was related to their main point as they didn’t make the links explicit.
- I found Koch and Tsuchiya's presentation very good. It was pitched at exactly the right level, and there was a lot of very interesting discussion throughout.
- In Tsuchiya and Koch the first part went a little slow, the second half a little fast, but it was all really good & useful to me in my work
- Cleeremans et al. was very good, I wanted more.
- For Cleeremans et al., the speakers presumed the audience members had background knowledge that I did not have nor do I believe many in the audience had.
• Cleeremans et al. - I REALLY enjoyed Engel's talk - maybe in the future he can be invited to give a full workshop. It was the best 45 minutes of the entire conference!

• I liked Hurlbert and Schwitzgebel's tutorial, but it felt like it was missing a beginning and end. I wanted a proper historical introduction and background on both introspection in general and the their method (DES) in particular. I also wanted to know much more about the findings about DES. There no data presented at tutorial and found that annoying. For $70 you expect to come away with a more academic grounding in the topic.

• Haynes - not enough technical implementation details.

• I thought overall the quality of the tutorials was down somewhat from Oxford. If you are going to charge $70 for a tutorial you really need to have someone at the level of a keynote presenting; many of the tutorials were apparently given by people closer to the level of postdocs or junior faculty. Hopefully more senior people will be invited next year. I suspect that much more work needs to be done to secure senior presenters who presumably won't submit a proposal unsolicited.

• It would be nice to have more senior presenters (similar to Oxford). Workshops should be restricted in numbers (max 20) and interactive. Actively seek out potential presenters rather than just wait for proposals to come in!

• State purpose, sequence content & summarize results.

• Clearly delineate those which are being used to outline a researchers body of work and associated papers from those which are really tutorials where new methods are being expounded and described.

Cost:

• Workshop was good. But I'm not sure it was worth paying for it.

• The cost of the tutorials was a real impediment to my attending any. Perhaps there could, in the future, be a discounted rate for students?

• Tutorials should be cheaper so that I could attend.

• Lower the cost!

• The tutorial fees were too high this year. $70 for what you get is too much, and puts a large barrier for students who were noticeably absent. Tutorials should be accessible to all. High financial barriers should be avoided.

• Fees should be lower (to allow students to attend).

Environment:

• Coffee should have been provided!

• The room noise and vibration was a little disconcerting.
• The room was large and was difficult to hear from the back rows. The presentation suffered from lack of audio amplification equipment.

**Generally positive remarks:**

• A number of these sound very interesting and important, and I wish I could have been there.

• I heard excellent report about the Legrand & Ruby tutorial. I'm sure the others were good also.

• I thoroughly enjoyed all the workshops I attended and the keynotes. The Magician Symposium was wonderful and I loved the presentation.

**Suggestions for future workshops:**

• We need some "practical" workshops aimed at "hands-on" issues, not just extended lectures.

• Social and psychological impact of the changing (ie, materialistic) understanding of consciousness.

• Applications of consciousness studies to the understanding and treatment of clinical issues in neurology, behavioral health, and mental health.

• Disorders of consciousness (e.g. studies concerning neurological and/or psychiatric patients)

• Yes - tutorial on US Govt funding opportunities for research and potential areas of applied mind-science.

• 1. A 101 workshop: basic terminology & state of research.
   2. summary of what topics and facts will be covered at the conference.

• Overview and/or trends in conscious studies.

• Workshop without a theoretical bias on the current state of things like memory and the brain, object recognition (some aspect), etc. This would be an update and review.

• Workshop concerning methodology in consciousness studies in more concrete terms, e.g., planning experiments that combine 1st, 2nd and 3rd person perspectives.

• My specific field of interest is the neurology of speech and conscious thought, developing plausible models that might serve as the basis for neuro research. No one was given even a concurrent talk on this area, much less a workshop.

• Yes, it would be nice to have my own proposals accepted! Seriously, there may be a bias in the review committee against certain styles of theory (from Bernard Baars and Stan Franklin). That would be a serious concern from a scientific point of view. As long as I'm telling it like it is, I must admit that I always have trouble understanding the philosophers, and devoting half of the presentations to philosophy seems like a misallocation of precious conference time.

• We would like to present next year www.brainpaint.com we created a presentation called BRAINPAINT LIVE! which you can find at www.consciouscreativity.org.
• Anesthesiology and its relevance to consciousness studies.

• Signal analysis

• I would like to listen to a talk by David Chalmers.

• Representational Theories of Consciousness/Philosophical Psychopathology/Metacognition

• I would like a workshop about the perception of time. Presenters like David Eagleman, Dean Buonomano, Warren Meck.

• Your selection this year was perfect. I just couldn't make it there in time.

Comments:

* One suggestion is that tutorials should be tutorial: designed to train participants in a field or technique. Several commentors suggested practical, clinical tutorials and overviews of central issues.

* On the other hand, some would like more specialized, high-level tutorials that present the most current research to an audience familiar with the basic problems in the field. Participants appreciated tutorials where recent, unpublished work is presented, and some were disappointed in tutorials that were not more specific. To address both of these concerns, the most important factor is to be very clear in stating what the tutorial will be about and what level it will aim toward.

* In either case, it would be a good idea for presenters to give participants material in advance of the conference in order to prepare for the tutorial. For ASSC10, presenters provided detailed abstracts of the tutorial, including 2-3 papers to be read prior to the conference. They also sent out emails in order to determine the level of content to present and to answer general questions in advance of the tutorial. It is suggested that presenters be given email addresses for participants one month ahead of the meeting to establish this pre-conference contact.

* Another common suggestion is to reduce the cost of tutorials. If the budget cannot sustain a lower cost overall, it would be helpful to offer a discount for students.

KEYNOTE TALKS

Four keynote speakers were invited to present:

Luis Pessoa: Affective vision: Prioritization does not imply automaticity
Alison Gopnik: Why babies are more conscious than we are
Marvin Chun: Probing unconscious perception and memory with functional brain imaging
David Rosenthal: Consciousness and its function

In addition, this section considers the Presidential Address and the William James Prize Lecture, respectively:

Michael Gazzaniga: The structure of human consciousness
Sid Kouider: A neural perspective on the levels of processing associated with unconscious perception
Keynote talks were rated consistently well, with five out of six speakers achieving an overall rating at or above 3: Gazzaniga (3.2), Pessoa (3.1), Gopnik (3.0), Chun (3.1), Kouider (3.4). Rosenthal was less well received (2.6), which follows a pattern of relatively lower ratings for philosophy talks.

More specific, scientific talks:

- Why "keynote" talks? There should be one intro, to give the conference topic, and one summary, to put it together. What's the point of the rest? I want *specifics*, not generalities.

- More cognitive psychologists? And can we tell them to focus more on original results (rather than reviews), as they'd do in other conferences? ASSC should not be treated as scientific lightweight.

- Less recapitulation of the past please, I prefer state-of-the-art.

- There seems to be a problem of getting presenters to pitch their talks at the right level. I don't want to hear another scientist give a data free presentation (e.g., Gopnik, Farah). I found Nakayama's talk way too basic; there seemed to be no understanding that the audience wanted more data and more sophisticated argument. Gopnik and Nakayama are v. good scientists, so it's not that the wrong keynotes were picked, just that keynotes pitched their talks at the wrong audience. Kouider or Gazzaniga's talks seemed about right.

- Try to make talks accessible to interdisciplinary audience! Present data/arguments (do not JUST entertain)!

Except:

- While they shouldn't dumb down the talks, I found many of the one's involving neuroimaging to either be too technical in nature, or to seem like they were just reworkings or previous talks.

Focus on ‘consciousness’:

- I would like to have key note, and many other, speakers who better serve the orginal aims of the organization, expressed in its very title. Something is a little out of balance when so much is devoted to trying to argue--on methodologically questionable evidence--that consciousness really isn't very significant. We need more on investigation of the interrelations among conscious states, the utility of causal models in their description, etc.

- Overall they were good but perhaps each speaker should briefly outline their operational definition of consciousness at the outset of their talk, as they all seemed to vary widely yet there was no mention of this. I felt Gopnik, although entertaining, in particular might not have done a great deal of thinking on the topic of consciousness and differentiating it from more basic perceptual awareness, attention to novel stimuli, etc. In some respects I felt this undermined her whole talk.

Presentation style:

- Rosenthal was stimulating, but I simply cannot endorse full-text slides - it is a lack of respect for the audience; rather no slides at all then.
• Moving graphical illustrations most concisely express the concept.

Generally positive remarks:

• They were good. Wish I could have stayed for Sid’s and David’s talks.

Speaker recommendations:

• Bjorn Merker was excellent in phylogeny/neuroanatomy. He should have a keynote talk next time.

• Chris Moore, a tactile perception/physiology researcher at MIT

• Tim Bayne

• Victor Lamme

• W. Singer, G. Buzsaki

• Something outside the ASSC party line

Comments:

* Again, the main suggestion in the responses is for more focused presentations. It would be useful to review the talks that have found the right balance of interdisciplinary introduction and new research to appeal both to first-time attendees and regular ASSC members. A brief set of guidelines could be drafted and sent to presenters. One guideline given to this year’s presenters was to plan a 30-minute talk for a 60-minute time slot. This allowed for more time for questions and answers after the talk, which was very useful.

* It is worth noting that the William James Prize speaker, Sid Kouider, was rated most highly overall (3.4). In previous years, there has been discussion of shortening the length of this talk due to poor response. The successful reception of this year’s speaker suggests that the talk continue to figure as a keynote presentation.

* Placing the James Prize toward the end of the schedule seems to be a better choice than directly following the Presidential Address. The Address and the reception served as a stimulating start to the conference.

MEMBERS’ SYMPOSIA

Three of the symposia proposed by ASSC members were selected for the meeting:

Symposium 2: Cortical networks and conscious awareness (Ishai, Malach, Tononi)
Symposium 3: The cognitive basis of intuitions about consciousness (Knobe, Gray, Robbins)
Symposium 4: Animal consciousness: Towards a scientific description and natural history (Edelman, Seth, Pepperberg, Merker, Fiorito)
In addition, the Tom Slick Symposium was held for the winners of the Tom Slick Award from the Mind-Science Foundation:

Symposium 1: 2006 Tom Slick Research Award in consciousness (Dennett, Gazzaniga, Saenz, Hoeft)

Though in a class by itself, the data for the Special Symposium are also included in this section.

Special Symposium: The magic of consciousness (Teller, Robbins, King, Randy, Thompson)

Due to an oversight in preparation of the survey, no data were collected for Symposium 3: The cognitive basis of intuitions about consciousness. Results for the other five symposia are displayed in the two figures on the following page. It should also be noted that Gazzaniga did not present at the Tom Slick Symposium, and Fiorito did not present at the Animal Consciousness Symposium.

Response to the symposia was very good overall. All received a weighted average ranking over 3: Tom Slick (3.1), Cortical Networks (3.4), Animal Consciousness (3.1), and Magic (3.6). The Magic Symposium proved very successful, achieving the most number of ‘Excellent’ responses of any meeting event (99).

![Symposia responses chart](chart.png)
On science, consciousness and ASSC:

- Check more for scientific content and credibility, not so much for "big names".
- My comment above I would also apply here. [more speakers on the science of consciousness, problematic to have speakers claim insignificance of consciousness]
- Disappointingly, some talks, although good, are really not about consciousness at all (e.t. Ishai). Can we tell them more explicitly in the future and avoid selecting people who are not really in this business?
- Something outside the ASSC party line which has led us to further confusion and is based on faulty assumptions

Specific remarks:

- The Dennett/Gazzaniga symposium would have been better had Gazzaniga attended it...
- What was Merker doing in the animal consciousness seminar? He should have been in the 2nd one. Otherwise, excellent.
- Malach also had a nice and fun symposium talk. It would have wide appeal as an invited keynote address.
- The Experimental Philosophy symposium was terrible.
On Magic:

- The magic symposium was fantastic -- it was the main reason I attended this year.
- The magician's panel was the best.
- The magicians gave us an ordinary magic show. We made fan-like comments. I only heard one productive suggestion from the magicians (that eyes track arcs more than straight lines). Randi at the end and the card-trick guy didn't even *try* to do anything other than a standard magic performance. Overall, we comported ourselves embarrassingly, though Dennett and Gopnik at least tried to make productive conversation.
- The Special Symposia was fun, but I didn't get much from it at an academic level.
- Magic was good fun, but not really relevant to consciousness. I would NOT suggest it become a regular feature of the meeting.

Venue:

- The Imperial Palace venue was a mistake. First, a non-smoker cannot enjoy the meeting (I got ill). Second, the room provided through congress is, I believe, among the lowest ranking (tremendous noise of music from right outside of the window until 3 am every night).

Suggestions for future symposia:

- Neurochemistry of Consciousness
- A bit more time - 2hrs would be perfect
- Again, my field of particular interest is the neurology of speech and what is termed conscious thought.
- Symposia of interest to me: Language and consciousness, social foundations of consciousness
- Include application and correlation to perhaps minority cultures, beliefs and thoughts; especially because next year's conference is in ASIA
- Animal consciousness should be more represented as it allows the comprehension of the impact of genes and environment; also what is consciousness in different cultures should be questioned during the meeting.
- The Science of Esoterics (Meditation/Yoga and the brain)
- Brain map topic.
- A symposia on the topic of sleep or anesthesia could be interesting.
- Would like access papers or PowerPoint presentations
Comments:

* The author is sad and chagrined to have no data for only philosophy symposium. Among philosophers, informal feedback was positive, but scientists may have been less pleased.
* The Magic Symposium proved very popular in survey responses, although several commentors noted the lack of academic content. Future organizers should weigh popularity against the academic mission of the conference. The particular circumstances that made the Magic Symposium possible (viz., the location in Las Vegas) suggests that this sort of event will be rare. Given the high academic standards throughout the program, the entertainment provided in the Magic Symposium was a welcome addition to some.

CONCURRENT TALKS

The Scientific and Program Committee members voted on the abstracts of talks and posters (N = 148) in which they or their lab members were not authors. The following instructions in rating proposals was given to all committee members:

Committee members should vote on ALL abstracts (barring those in which there is a clear conflict of interest), including those that fall outside their area of expertise (e.g., philosophy for the scientists). The meeting is meant to be interdisciplinary and at the least abstracts should be accessible to all. If committee members only vote on a subset of the abstracts (e.g., vision) its becomes much more problematic to combine and rank abstracts overall.

Voting is on a 1-5 scale, with half votes allowed (1-immediate reject, 2-poor, 3-good, 4-very good, 5-outstanding). Generally scores below 2.5 will be considered for rejection, above 4.0 for a talk.

Qualities to look for in an abstract are: (1) Originality; (2) Relevance to research on consciousness (good, but seemingly irrelevant work should be marked down); (3) Clarity of ideas (ASSC-10 is an interdisciplinary meeting; abstracts should be intelligible for all members of the conference committee irrespective of background).

Abstracts generally fall into three categories: philosophical, empirical (i.e., original data being presented), and theoretical (non-empirical, but also non-philosophical). We are trying to encourage more empirical work at our meetings and a slightly higher mark should be awarded abstracts which present new data (say +1/2).

Membership status, and author preference for paper/poster slots, should be ignored in assessment.

There were 32 talk slots; the top 23 ranked empirical talks, and 9 ranked philosophical proposals requesting a talk slot were accepted. The raw cut-off score for a talk was a z-score of 0.35. 10 out of 148 proposals were withdrawn (6%), and 3 were rejected (2%). Interestingly, 32 of those who submitted an abstract (24%) preferred to present a poster, and 18 (14%) were willing to either present an oral presentation or a poster.
Response to the concurrent talks was good (2.8), but could be improved.

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**Choice of abstract/speaker:**

- *Invite potential presenters that you know are good and innovative (not always the same faces)!*

- *Advertise more widely for membership in scientific communities to get more "real" scientists in.*

- *Please do not list on the roster the heads of the labs that the grad students are presenting for. That is, when deciding whether or not we want to attend the conference, we tend to look at who is going to be presenting. Thus, for example when we see that Changeaux and Smith are scheduled to give a talk, we are excited because we want to see Changeaux talk, only to find out that he is not there, just his grad student Smith. Therefore, in the future please just list Smith as the presenter.*

- *There should be some genuine culling of the abstracts. The concurrent talks in the Temporality session, for example, were uniformly of poor quality. The speakers had little interesting data and what appeared to be zero experience standing in front of an audience. There are enough real researchers in this field that a better group could have been collected.*

- *The Temporality session was very disappointing. There were posters on temporality that would have made better presentations than these.*
Too much, too little philosophy:

- What I attended seemed to be focused on narrow results, no results, or even one presentation on the obsolete 19th century history of perceptions of the optic nerve, or vision with eyes shut. If this came at a 19th century meeting of the ASSC I would of course have been riveted.

- Again, for scientists the number of slots allocated to philosophers seems excessive, to the detriment of scientific presentations that were downgraded to posters.

- More philosophical talks will be better. I think the best arrangement is to have 1:1 ratio of philosophical talks and scientific talks.

- It seemed to me that there was a lot more of interest for philosophers in the concurrent sessions than in the main talks and symposia. In the end, of the main talks, only Rosenthal's had much philosophical argument at all.

Environment:

- The talks seemed very good this year. The only problem was that one of the rooms was ridiculously cold.

- Frustrating noise from other meeting rooms + frustrating noise from air conditioning system (and temperatures all too low!)

Generally positive remarks:

- More of them. Only two rooms? Not enough.

- Thought they were great. Nice selection.

- I don't know. But this year's quality for presentation seems to be particularly good, as compared to the last few years.

- They were all quite good...

- I'd rate them between 3 and 4 as some were excellent.

Suggestions:

- Might be nice to have a brain mapping exhibit to show how this is done? Or is that out of the question?

- For an educated layperson, there was a lot of discussion of methodology with extensive jargon, but I guess that was what was wanted to prove their work.

- More biology/physiology, e.g. molecular mechanisms underlying brain states.

- Would it be possible to get a translator for speakers with English-language difficulty? Perhaps speakers could be given an option to have a translator.
• They should be shorter 30 minutes is too long. Too many of the talks were 15 minute talks that were extended. It would have been nice if more people had the opportunity to give talks.

• Again, consciousness needs to be better defined by each speaker. I felt some talks had more to do with attention and perception (which is fine if they were labeled as such) than what I would define as consciousness. With definitions varying so widely, it is important to explain what one means by consciousness before discussing research results.

Comments:

* Some problems from previous years did not appear in this year’s concurrent sessions. Chairs kept sessions on time for the most part, and movement from one session to the next was very easy. It is worth noting the value of strict moderators and of placing concurrent sessions in adjoining rooms.

* In terms of the venue, there were no serious technical problems, another improvement over previous conferences. However, poor acoustics and loud background noise made it difficult to hear the speakers, who sometimes spoke very softly or had difficulty with English. One of the rooms was terribly cold, which was particularly shocking to anyone who had been in the Las Vegas heat for lunch. It is often difficult to ensure that venue problems will not arise, yet they are clearly a very important consideration in the choice of conference location.

* Regarding academic content, the rating for concurrent talks (2.7) decreased from ASSC-10 (3.2), and a number of respondents commented on the poor quality, particularly in the Temporality session. The correspondingly low cut-off score (z-score of 0.35) for accepted talks suggests that the concern about quality is substantive. Since the cut-off score has been dropping at a steady rate (ASSC 10 cut-off = 0.6; ASSC 8 cut-off = 0.9), future organizers should consider ways to improve this aspect of the conference.

POSTER SESSIONS

Two, two-hour long poster sessions were held in the late morning session of the first and second full day of the conference. The poster sessions were held in a conference room adjacent to the main meeting rooms, allowing for easy access to posters throughout the day. Posterboards were arranged in two lines, and posters attached to both sides of each board. This arrangement made for very little space between posters, and movement through the room was difficult.

86 posters were accepted for presentation. The weighted average for the posters was good (2.9), slightly better than for the concurrent talks (2.8) but lower than ASSC 10 (3.0).
Environment:

- *The room we presented in was too small. With twice the space, the presenters and attendees would have been much more comfortable.*

- *Ensure room is brightly lit.*

- *Larger room!!!!*

- *Space was a little tight, but it was good to have them up all day.*

- *Bigger room, refreshments available in the same room*

- *Yes. 1. Be very sure that when you specify that a poster may be 4x4’, the space is not actually smaller. And 2, Be sure that all posters are given full, clear, bright and adequate lighting. It's really irritating to have to go out and buy a flashlight so attendees can see your poster. People naturally migrate to the poster that they can see, so your participation is a waste of time if they can't see your poster as well as the posters beckoning on the other side of the viewing aisle. It may be accidental, but it's effectively insulting and abusive.*

- *Room was small and cramped.*

- *Maybe put them in a bit larger room.*

- *Note on improving conference: sound quality was terrible. I was unable to hear enough of many of the talks to understand them. Any improvement in acoustics would be a tremendous benefit.*

- *Bigger area?*

- *The room was too small. It made it difficult to move through the room and to talk with presenters.*
Improve quality of posters:

• Some were really very good. Others were pretty bad. The good ones should be upgraded to talks, and the bad ones left as posters, or rejected. There's just a very limited capacity for any conference like this, not to mention the attendees' own minds...

• Some of the posters weren't posters. They were just large bodies of text with some sections highlighted. I don't have any real suggestions for making this better that doesn't involve heaps more work for the organizers.

• The cut-off for acceptance of posters seemed too high this year. There were clearly several very crazy presentations accepted. There was also a lot of stuff that was just irrelevant.

• Why do you accept posters the quality of which is clearly too low for a scientific/philosophical conference? As everybody knows there is a place for 'such things': The Tucson Meetings.

Positive remarks:

• Some of the best material at the conference was in the posters, e.g. those from David Leopold's NIMH group.

• The poster sessions seemed well run. I appreciated the several organizational emails that I received pre-conference.

Presentation suggestions:

• Have each presenter *scheduled* for a 5 minute talk on their poster, at the session.

• Perhaps more handouts

• Allow time (e.g., during set up) for presenters to speak to one another. Too difficult during open presentation.

• Advertise more widely for membership in scientific communities to get more "real" scientists in.

• Some presenters were not available.

• I think it is necessary to compartment more clearly each category. [editor: to arrange posters into categories.]

Comments:

* As with concurrent sessions, the venue specifications for the poster session are extremely important to its success. The room for the poster session was conveniently located; however it needs to be larger to provide ample room for some to gather and discuss a poster while others move on. Room size and posterboard configuration have been a consistent problem with poster presentations, so it would be worth calculating exactly how much space is necessary to give presenters and viewers sufficient room to stand or move.
* Poster quality is also a question. Comments point to an inconsistency in the quality of posters that might be improved through specific advice on how to construct an effective poster. This would be especially helpful to philosophers who rarely prepare posters for philosophy conferences.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Three scheduled social events were: the Venetian reception, Gala banquet, and the student social. The figures below show a very positive response to the Venetian reception as well as the Gala banquet. The student social was also reviewed positively.
VENETIAN RECEPTION

The Venetian reception was held following the President’s Address on the first evening of the conference. It was held in the Canaletto restaurant at the Venetian Resort-Casino which was approximately 10 minutes from the meeting location in the Imperial Palace Hotel. The overall response to the reception was excellent. (3.7)

Venue:

- I found the space a bit isolating. Rooms were small and did not facilitate moving around and meeting different people.
- I liked having the reception in a place where we could continue to chat/drink after the formal reception was over. Receptions with a narrow time window work much less well.
- Well done. More generally, Las Vegas is not my favorite place. Santa Fe might be much more peaceful. But I understand the attraction of having the magicians.
- Better if in same building. Avoid Vegas in the future.
- Well, we forgot our directions at the hotel and could not find a single person at the Venetian who heard of the ASSC. It would have been nice to have left some clue of directions at the front desk.
- Maybe less seating since its easier to meet more people/move around if everyone is standing.
Food (vegetarian, please) and drink:

- Good food.

- My wife and I don't drink, we prefer to maintain ourselves in a fully conscious state, so the character of the event did not really seem appropriate for us. And if you don't drink, it was also a bit pricy for an indeterminate dining experience.

- The reception was top quality, but I thought it was too lavish! I don't mean to go cheap, but we'd have had as good a reception with a little less expense. At Psychonomics we have a no-host bar (how cheap can you get!) and conversations and meeting new people are just as good. Of course Psychonomics prides itself on being cheap.

- More vegan options.

- Very nice ambiance, but again there are hardly any vegetarian options. It's annoying not being able to eat 90% of the food. Hopefully this can be improved upon in Taipei.

- Make sure there is a vegetarian option

Miscellaneous:

- I doubt that next year's will be as well attended.

- It was the best pre-organised evening with better dinner than the gala banquet.

GALA BANQUET

The Gala banquet was held on the second evening of the conference (Saturday) in the Zeffirino restaurant which is also at the Venetian Resort-Casino, about 10 minutes walk from the meeting location. The cost was $85, somewhat higher than in previous years, and this figured prominently in responses. In a separate question on cost, 74% (100) of respondents would be more likely to attend a banquet that cost less (approximately $50); 26% (35) of respondents would not be more likely to attend a lower cost banquet. Although individual comments are not favorable, overall response to the banquet was good (3.3).

Cost:

- If you want more students to attend, you have to make it more affordable to them.

- $95 for a banquet? Come on, that's absurd. Do you want students to attend, or not?

- Even $50 is high for this.

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5 The price of the banquet was listed on the survey as the outdated price of $95.
• $95 is too steep. While it is OK for faculty, it is prohibitive for students and these events need to be accessible for all attendees.

• Reduce the price, or include alcohol as a price option.

• Less expensive

• Keep the quality first priority. Price is secondary.

• Cheaper would be better

• It’s the major social event of the conference so it would be great if more people were able to attend. I think the price should be decreased.

• Why do we need a banquet that is expensive and not inclusive? Either include everyone or do not have it at all.

• Less expensive

• In general such meeting is very expensive when coming from abroad; limiting the expenses would be nice

• The banquet was ridiculously expensive. This might be what you need to pay on the Strip, but this suggests that you go off the Strip or not hold the meeting in Vegas at all. At this price no student and many postdocs are excluded which creates a two-tier feeling to the meeting which I personally hated. This wasn't improved by the obvious "high table" where the important people sat, leaving the plebs to their own devices.

• More affordable, more accommodating to vegetarians, more student-friendly, NO VIP-table!!!(ASSC meetings should be based on equality of all attendees!)

Food:

• I’d rather have a good banquet than a cheap one. Having a vegetarian option is essential.

• The banquet was "poor" at any price. Wish I had made other plans.

• Make sure there is a vegetarian option.

• Please a restaurant that invested more in its ingredients than in the décor. the red wine was undrinkable (except for the mediocre barolo), and the food so-so or less. in and of itself the food would be ok, but what we got for $95 was ridiculous, even if the décor was ok

Miscellaneous:

• Better if in same building. Avoid Vegas in the future.

• Order pizza and have a round table discussion.
**STUDENT SOCIAL**

The student social was held on the third evening of the conference (Sunday) at the Freakin’ Frog Beer Bar, which was a short cab ride from the meeting location. The Mind Science Foundation donated $1,000 toward the event to provide snacks and drinks. Student Committee member Michael Hill did the initial organizing, while committee member Joel Parthemore completed arrangements upon arrival in Las Vegas. Conference chair and senior committee member Stephen Macknik assisted with the publicity.

Rather than a formal program, students and senior faculty talked informally in small groups. The event was held in the upper room at The Freakin' Frog, a student bar just off the UNLV campus. About 50 people attended the event, which overflowed the second floor space to fill most of the ground floor as well. Many people signed a thank-you note for the Mind Science Foundation.

Overall response to the event was quite good (3.1).

**Timing:**

- *The student social should be held on the first or second day of the conference to promote early interactions and networking between students throughout the conference.*

- *Have the social event a little earlier on in the conference*

**STUDENT SERVICES**

Previous conferences have included a mentoring component, where a senior researcher is paired with a student. In response to an inquiry, only one researcher expressed an interest in participating in such a program, whereas 80% of student respondents (24 out of 30) would be interested in participating. This differential response indicates the difficulty in finding researchers to match the student demand. Other comments about the meeting in regard to students are:

**Cost:**

- *More of an attempt to get students cheap accommodation in the same area/hotel.*

- *Financial travel assistance!*

- *The prices of this year's meeting (registration, banquet, workshops) were far too high for many students (which was reflected in very low numbers of student attendees). Make it more affordable!*

- *I think the entrance fee is too expensive for students who do not get any financial support.*

- *I certainly appreciated the online forum for finding roommates.*
Interaction:

- Perhaps there might be some kind of bulletin board - at the conference or on the web - pairing students with definable projects with neuro research partners who might be interested so they could meet and discuss the proposed project(s) at the conference.

- I found the meeting, since it is such a small community anyway, to be a brilliant place to meet others, just as it is.

- Organizers would give a 1 to 2 hour speech about the state of the industry; what discoveries have been made recently.

- 1. A little more room for them in the program; 2. a research ideas session – i.e. current unanswered topics worth pursuing.

ADMINISTRATION

Conference organizers used an online system administered by ConferenceSoft.com to accept online registration, payment and abstract submission. ConferenceSoft.com also reviewed abstracts for complete information. The cost was $14 per registration plus 4% of total transactions processed. The total cost was approximately $6,000. Remaining administrative duties, including maintenance of the conference website, were done by the local organizers.

REGISTRATION

Conference registration opened March 2, roughly three months prior to the meeting. The deadline for early registration and abstract submission was initially April 1, then extended to April 16.

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<td>$440</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASSC student member</td>
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<td>Non-member</td>
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For the first time this year, conference registration was mandatory with abstract submission in order to ensure that all presenters were sincerely interested. In addition, a 10% cancellation fee also helped to eliminate proposals that lack scientific or conceptual depth. One concern, however, is that the policy may discourage submissions from students and junior researchers who have few resources, particularly when the cost of attending the conference is high. The survey question on this point was problematic because it did not give an option for ‘no opinion’ or ‘don’t know’, so attendees who did not submit an abstract were unsure how to answer. Consequently, the number of responses in favor of (31%) and against (69%) mandatory registration should be taken as a rough measure. Comments on mandatory registration follow:

- It would be helpful to make registration less expensive.
• It was a significant hardship for me, especially as I did not know for some time after I submitted the abstract whether I would be accepted for a poster presentation or talk, without which I would not be able to receive funding to attend.

• Seems OK.

• Don't see any reason why it shouldn't be mandatory to register if you are submitting. I guess if abstracts were rejected, I could see waiting to let people register until after they knew the outcome of their submission.

• With abstract *acceptance*, certainly. Submission? Whatever for?

• Presenters will need to register for the conference in order to attend, so registration is obligatory, but should not be mandatory at the time of abstract submission.

• I voted because this question is mandatory, but this question is hard to answer without more information about the underlying issues. I have no clear sense of what the reason for this policy is.

• If people are given participation they are going to show up and register. If they just want to come to the conference they will come. Tethering abstract submission to conference sign-up seems a bit aggressive, even punitive.

• It [registration] should be before an accepted proposal is included in the programme.

• This should be only for presenting author. But how can that person present anyway w/o attending and registering?

• Many people who submit abstracts are students and perhaps can't afford the conference. That would perhaps limit the quality and quantity of posters submitted.

• The conference is expensive, especially for people without grants (most philosophers). One should be able to decide whether to commit the money AFTER one knows whether one is giving a poster or a talk. I feel strongly about this.

• I would favor spreading the ASSC net as widely as possible. I realize that money is a problem, but raising the threshold for abstract submissions is just not appropriate at this early time in the field's development.

• This year was no big deal; but the cost of going to Taiwan for next year's is such that I could only justify it if I was giving a talk.

• No, since funding from research institutions often depends on whether you're accepted or not. As it is, would I not have been accepted, I would simply not have had the money to attend.

• It's a bit much to pay and then not be accepted; I know people who didn't bother because of this.

• Not with, but after acceptance. Also, longer submission window (i.e., more in advance).
• If my poster had not been accepted, I would not have been able to come, this would have required the hassle of going through the process of getting my reg fee back

• I don’t understand this question

• People should not have to pay unless their submission is accepted, contra SfN.

• I don't care whether it costs money to the organizers. People should be free to withdraw without cost if they can’t get a talk or a poster. It is just wrong to force people to pay for not only basic registration, but also extras (banquet, tutorials) up front, and then keep 10% of the total fees paid (inc., banquet, tutorials). This is either inept or greedy.

• Only if talk is accepted.

• I think people should only be asked to register AFTER their abstract has been accepted. It seems totally unfair that people pay for registration (without the option of a full refund) before they even know whether they can come to the conference (for a lot of people funding depends on whether they are presenting or not).

• It shouldn’t, since often an abstract for a talk is then accepted only as a poster and sometimes people don’t find it worthy enough to come, but then they have already spent a lot of money for registration...not good.

• There should be a fee to submit abstracts in order to cover costs, but do not make registration mandatory. This allows for the greatest flexibility in that if an abstract is not accepted, then at least that speaker is not committed to attend (which he/she would be if they had already paid registration).

• I thought it was very odd that one, in essence, had to pay a fee just to submit an abstract (even if possibly reimbursed 90%). Some potential presenters cannot attend for financial reasons if not accepted. The final schedule also appeared very late; plane reservations etc had to be made earlier.

• I think this was a bit of a problem. The ASSC would probably get more submissions if students could hear the results of their abstract submission and the results of the travel awards before having to pay to the registration fee. This might especially be the case for submissions from philosophy students. My impression at the conference was that science students have an easier time acquiring funding for conference registration and travel than do philosophy students.

• Refundable if not accepted

• Not sure what you mean - do some people submit abstracts and not attend or dont pay. or are you saying you have to submit an abstract to come if the former fix it - if the latter that would discourage students etc silly so you’re probably not thinking that. registration was fine

• Some people may not want to attend if they are not presenting. That is reasonable. Someone should not have to pay for the entire conference just to see if their abstract is accepted.

• I don't know how many people submit an abstract and then do not register/come to the meeting. Unless there are many, making planning difficult for the organizers, I'd prefer registration closer to the meeting.
General remarks on registration:

- As far as the registration process goes, just how fast do you think people can write? Normally, conferences in the sciences are arranged, completed, 6 months to a year in advance. Journal articles have a 1-2 year turn-around in this field, and you want people to write a decent paper/presentation, get scheduled, etc., in 1-2 months? The planning for these needs to be *much* longer range.

- The web portal worked well

- As this is a relatively small meeting, one author should be allowed to submit more than one abstract!

Comments:

* The use of ConferenceSoft.com established an efficient system to register for the conference and submit abstracts. The absence of any complaints about registration and submission is remarkable.
* Mandatory registration with abstract submission is a difficult issue. On one hand, it successfully narrowed the number of submissions, thereby significantly reducing the work of the review committee. Further, the cost of processing submissions is calculated per abstract, so money is saved when fewer abstracts are processed. On the other hand, fewer submissions will likely mean lower quality and less innovative proposals overall. A compromise approach may be to require registration after acceptance, prior to the final revisions of the conference program. In this way, the published conference program only lists speakers and poster presenters who have committed to attend the conference.
* In terms of administering the tutorials, conference organizers developed a coding system for tutorials and the banquet that worked effectively to monitor participants in these events. Colored dots were placed on the front of the badge for easy identification of participants by monitors at the door of the event. In addition, a note on the back of the badge informed the attendee of her registration (or lack of registration) in events, which served as a prompt to register as desired. The timing of events at the conference went very smoothly with everything running on schedule throughout the meeting. Conference organizers took particular care to choose session moderators who would be able to keep presenters and discussants from running late. In preparing moderators for the conference, future organizers should be sure to emphasize the value of running sessions on time.
* Another valuable outcome of the administration of ASSC-11 is the good press coverage garnered by the conference. Organizers sent out several press releases and advertised the conference website on scientific and cognitive science mailing lists. This sort of public relations work is extremely helpful in attracting members to ASSC. Consciousness studies in general gains prominence as well, which adds justification to funding proposals by consciousness researchers.
CONFERENCE FORMAT

Longer, more concurrent sessions:

- The length is perfect, and I like the relatively short time limits for each talk. I'd like to see more options for the concurrent sessions -- perhaps running 3 at a time instead of 2.
- Longer time for each talk even if that means more concurrent sessions.
- It seemed like the 30-minute sessions were rushed a bit
- More of the posters should have been presentations.

Dates:

- Timing is just right - A conference that spans a weekend is essential
- Timing & length were perfect. I could treat it like an extended weekend.
- There was a conspicuous drop in attendance Monday. Might holding the meeting Friday-Saturday-Sunday remedy this to some extent?
- Thurs-Sun.
- Thursday through Sunday is better than Friday through Monday. The Friday - Monday impacts two work weeks.
- It's very important that the meeting include a week-end; many people cannot attend otherwise.
- Avoid the weekend and move the conference to Sunday-Thursday.
- Move the conference to Sunday-Thursday

Venue:

- 4-5 days is about right. But I will ***NEVER***, under any circumstances, go to Las Vegas again. Never. Aside from the crummy hotel and the noise outside the conference rooms, the whole setting is disturbing, expensive, and distracting, not to mention the impressions of the US it gives foreign visitors.
- No, I thought all of that went pretty well. I would have preferred a better hotel or university setting for the program, however.
- I missed the opportunity to meet fellow attenders outside of the meetings. There was no place to drink a cup of coffee with them and to talk about what one had seen and heard. I was there by myself and couldn't make any serious contact because of that.
General remarks:

- General format seems OK.
- The format was good. The price was a bit hefty.
- More breaks. Coffee and snacks continuously available, in a separate, maybe adjacent room -- but not so close to a room that noise from conversation would interfere with a talk. The best thing about conferences is not the talks (I can read their essays, which are often better) but rather the opportunity to meet people and have conversations.
- The scheduling was horrible, as was the venue. Scheduling a 5 hour break in the middle of the day is ridiculous; the poster sessions should be held later in the day (perhaps last thing of the day) and talks should be put together. Also, lack of food and local options made us at the mercy of the food of the venue, which was also horrible. The musical interruptions of the talks was unacceptable and unprofessional. The lack of Internet access was also ridiculous. The venue should have been vetted MUCH more thoroughly. ASSC10 was substantially better on multiple fronts.
- This was a good choice the way it was.
- 8:30am was a bit early. 9 would be more manageable, and I'm a morning person.
- Start a little later in the day!
- I think it would be better to have the same arrangement of the schedule as previous meetings.
- 3 hour sessions without a break are very draining. Perhaps these could be shortened to 2 hours?
- I missed the opportunity to have a real discussion with the speakers. Time was very short only 2 questions could be asked. I missed the discussion with the speakers.
- Friday is a full day but with optional workshops. Monday is also a full day, but not optional and therefore too long.
- Maybe not having a keynote speaker that late on the last day, not having to chose between staying an extra night or missing out.
- Shorter talks
- This is good over a weekend. Perhaps talks could be shorter to allow more speakers and more diversity.
- Student Social should be on Saturday as in previous years, Banquet on the Sunday. Generally there was a feeling that students were second class citizens at this meeting. This was illustrated with the costs of registration, costs of banquet, costs of tutorials.
- Maybe hold the poster sessions either first thing in the morning or last thing in the afternoon.
- I think the format is fine.
• The format is quite good.

• Less days for the info presented.

• You do not need to change.

• How about some crosstalk (e.g. between philosophers and scientists...this seemed to be discouraged).

• Have a 5 minute break between sessions if possible, esp between a concurrent and a plenary or symposium.

• This is a pretty good format.

• The tutorials were the most exciting part of the conference for me. Having more of them available (or scheduled so you could attend more) would be great.

• As usual for conferences, better attendance at the poster sessions would have been good too. Maybe serve food or have them in the same room following a popular speaker?

• It was good -- should not be made longer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE TOPICS & SPEAKERS

• Dennett again and Douglas Hofstadter

• Keynote Arthur Reber - Implicit Learning

• Experimental and theoretical work focussing on the roles of conscious states and contents in thought and action. Presentation of the methodology that requires. Topics more in line with the very name of the organization.

• You might try for Overgaard. And you ***really*** should get Philip Zelazo, he's fantastic. Also, what about someone who *really* knows about "emergence", such as Kim or Kauffman?

• The magicians were wonderful. That will be difficult to replicate next year, but having some applied session might be worthwhile.

• There's seemed to be less emphasis on modeling and neuroanatomy in recent years, and I miss those topics. Almost all of the "hard" neuro talks now seem to be about imaging/recording, and I think we have overkill on that topic.

• No. It's an interdisciplinary scramble, and that's what I like about it. It's not as academically political as many other venues, particularly the journals.

• Spiritual leaders and minority neurologists, philosophers and other experts (Asian, Middle Eastern, etc)
• Ole Jensen, on alpha-gamma integration and consciousness. Or Palva and Palva, and others on the same topic. Also: Merker, as mentioned above. Also: Large-scale models of conscious and unconscious cognitive functions. (Walter Schneider, Stan Franklin).

• Consciousness and it's many aspects. The science of metaphysics. This is a very hot topic right now and you would get an amazing turn out. see transvision2007 for example of high level dialogue on such.

• Anesthesiology!

• Alternatives to global workspace models

• Follow-up on Tononi's work.

• Self and subjectivity

• Given the rapid growth in the discipline I'd like to see a continuation of separate sections on self consciousness. With regards to speakers I would be interested in talks from:
  Antii Revonsuo
  Jon Opie
  Daniel Wegner

• Quantal mechanism for distant intentionality.

• EEG neurofeedback. Any clinician and/or researcher in the field; Barry Sterman!, Marvin Sams, (Joseph J. Horvat) etc.

• Speakers: Alan Hobson, Damasio, Ramachandran.
  Topics: thalamical cortex, synchronicity, sleep, monkey physiology, animal models of consc.

• Maybe a session on "What are we talking about when we use the term 'consciousness'?' with perhaps an overview of different theorists' approach to the term. Does it require self-awareness? Distinguishing consciousness from learning, cognition, sense and perception, etc.

• Development of general models for consciousness.

• I would like to keep ethologists and child developmentalists involved. How about Uta Frith, for example? As a philosopher I would like to see a few new faces. I know, for instance, that Andy Clark would be potentially interested, so I would recommend to invite him. Another philosopher that I would like to hear is Jaegwon Kim.

• Joint attention, social cognition: Chris Frith, Rebecca Saxe

• Comparison of methods for assessing degrees of awareness; more credible neuroscience

• Animal neurophysiological studies

• Gamma synchrony, quantum mechanics, molecular neurobiology

• Theory of mind, free will
• David Chalmers, Qualia, Ken Mogi, sir Roger Penrose, and, Nicholas Humphrey

• Maybe a symposium on Higher-order theories of consciousness. More on infant consciousness and/or concept formation. Conceptualism.

• More philosophy in the main sessions would be good. Particularly, more of a focus on philosophers making and defending arguments.

• It would be great to hear from Victor Lamme and/or Stuart Hammerrof

• The significance of the study of language in relation to consciousness is systematically underestimated and not as visible as it could be. Language structure and the structure of consciousness can be presented from the perspectives of different disciplines. Although the there was one conference (in Barcelona) having in its title 'language', it was not that representative in this respect.

• Marcel Kinsbourne, Nicholas Humphrey, Susan Grennfield

• More pharmacology and modelling.

• Genetic of conscious processing is an emerging topic that should be addressed

• David Eagleman

• The psychological sub-conscious

FINAL COMMENTS

• Prequalify the presentation skills

• Get the students feeling more involved!

• Although we should be open to presentation and evaluation of various points of view, I am concerned with the increasing emphasis upon the view that consciousness is relatively insignificant in thought and the control of action—a view based on the kind of work that has been submitted vigorous methodological critique and alternative explanation within psychology. The final keynote address was illustrative. Behaviorism first, then some of cognitivism, has been motivated by the mistaken belief—the fear—that theoretical assertions for the causal roles of conscious states entail metaphysical assertions of nonmaterialism and/or indeterminism. To another member in Las Vegas I even said—half jokingly—that we seem to be moving toward an Association for the Suppression of Scary Consciousness. Seems worth preserving the aim embodied in our official name.

• You need to plan further ahead. You need a bigger venue. You need people from *clinical* fields, like epilepsy, anesthesia, head trauma, etc., etc. There’s *lots* of people there who work with various parameters of consciousness.
• The Imperial Palace was significantly below the standards of hotels in which I usually choose to stay. The environment, service, upkeep and quality found at the hotel left much to be desired for a hotel in general, but specifically as a conference hotel.

• Vegas wasn't a good location for a conference: too hard to run into other researchers, we all disappeared into the chaos.

• Overall, I'd like to see more concurrent sessions and fewer plenary talks and posters. Many of the plenary talks don't have wide enough interest to justify making them the only choice; meanwhile, posters work very poorly for the theory-heavy presentations prevalent at ASSC. Concurrent sessions allow more focus, variety, and realtime interaction.

• I do think more effort on networking - between students and senior researchers, or "philosophy" projects and potential neuro research partners - would be very helpful. Because I speak Brazilian Portuguese I was able to link up with a neuro researcher from the University of São Paulo, discuss the research potentials in my project and perhaps I can put something together that way to isolate neurological events during the different moments of input and output in both speech and non-vocalized speech to see if, in fact, it constitutes what we experience as "conscious thought." Wouldn't that be fun? But since I couldn't get a concurrent session to explain my project, and my poster was positioned in the dark, it was very hard to get any attention for it. A better networking process, in other words, might have been helpful. And finally, thanks. I still greatly enjoyed the event, the people, the issues, the ideas, the results - all of it.

• The organization was excellent this year.

• The hotel/casino atmosphere was too distracting (noise/music from the casino drifting into the meeting rooms).

• The money saved on a less lavish reception could be spent on continuously available coffee.

The magicians were a brilliant stroke!

How about something in Taiwan that gives a GOOD presentation of Eastern conceptions of mind/body, consciousness, etc. I don't want to hear the same old same old on Eastern perspectives. I want to hear a working philosopher or scientist who has thought about these issues and East-West differences in core (unconscious) assumptions.

Many of our problems in understanding consciousness come from our unconscious assumptions that result from the perspective we were exposed to from the Judeo-Christian heritage. Islamic core assumptions are not much different in this respect.

We can't help being influenced -- or formed -- by the religious and cultural world we are born into. If the dominant religion was some form of Buddhism and the society were more collectivistic than ours, what would the core assumptions be? How would they influence our theories and research questions?

Asians often worry that their culture will be seen as exotic and not as informative. Many with whom I have talked don't get it, that we always learn from a different perspective. A symposium that was SERIOUS, not "orientalizing," would be a great contribution.

• From an outsider's point of view, the conference was fascinating and memorable!
• Yes, I would hope that MSF, or some other foundation, would help support ASSC. The science is so good these days that there MUST be foundations out there that are waking up! ASSC should not be so tightly budget-limited. Barring direct funding, I would hope that MSF would make people-power available, to support ASSC’s clerical, promotional, and website needs.

• Vegas was a great choice and loved the magician workshop. It is an honor meeting and listening to all the amazing minds that presented.

• It would have been better if the William James prize speaker could give the talk in earlier days. I understand the concern we had last year about allowing a junior researcher new to the conference to give a talk on the first day. But to be fair, for that junior person it would be MUCH nicer to be able to give the talk and receive feedbacks and have discussions throughout the conference. My feeling is so long as we tell them explicitly this is an opportunity to present original data/theories to impress an audience, they would not give lightweight review talks. This year’s talk, for instance, is to me the best keynote.

• I didn't like the hotel. Run-down, hard to get in and out of.

• For this year's meeting, it would be better to have after party and to have coffee break in the corridor instead of inside the meeting room.

• Admittedly, Vegas is a unique place and in a way I'm glad it was there, as I would not go there myself. Still, I wonder whether the money spent on a rather middle class hotel (considering what else is on the strip) with single glazing and a mountain of sound outside (and failing wifi) plus a very mediocre expensive dinner, whether that money wouldn't have been better spent on a less outrageous venue with slightly lower prices but higher quality. I'm not asking for the Bellagio, but a conference centre with a soundproof conference room that does not resemble a freezer would be great.

• Las Vegas was not, overall, a good place for the conference. The city is generally unpleasent to be in. It was also hard to find other conference attendees when not in session. I also really did not enjoy the Imperial Palace, it was cramped, cold and smelt terrible everywhere I went.

• Avoid holding the conference in Las Vegas -- it's an awful place. the hotel was especially bad.

• Overall, much better than ASSC9, both in quality and organization.

• Holding the meeting at the hotel was tremendously convenient.

• The program index was off by a page. The program index should include tutorial presenters.

• Organizers did a fantastic job!

• Coffee should be out at all time..not just the afternoon break.

• The conference subject matter needs more balance in the approaches to explaining consciousness. There should be better representation of Panpsychism. There should be more questioning of what might be wrong with the standard approach of science, in principle.
• Never hold a conference in Vegas!

The overall quality of the venue was incredibly tacky and this permeated the meeting in general. The apparent disregard for students (and poorer attendees in general) was annoying. Not having good places to simply hang out with attendees between breaks (the hotel was so hideous it was simply v. unpleasant to talk anywhere in the hotel or on the Strip) greatly lowered the quality of the meeting for me. Why pay for a venue where the air-conditioning is so high that you can't sit comfortably during philosophy sessions or that musak is played during afternoon plenary sessions?

Don't keep the meeting so long. Less is more! Start the meeting at 9am and finish earlier. Always start the morning with plenary talk: It just shows a disregard for concurrent speakers if you place them first thing in the morning after the banquet the night before. I would prefer to go back to three concurrent sessions as at Oxford.

Overall I came away not feeling I learned any new. The most enjoyable aspect of the meeting was the magic symposia, and I think this is quite telling. This is an ACADEMIC meeting. If by far the best thing was hanging out with magicians then it actually speaks very badly for the quality of the content of meeting as a whole. This whole meeting seemed much closer to a Tucson meeting without any of the fun wacky talks or the nice city to hangout in (actually this is the first time I would have preferred to be at Tucson not ASSC). Hopefully we can go back to having serious academic meetings in the future, or else the ASSC is doomed. I think a lot of this is due to the venue (both tacky and making it v. hard to interact with other attendees), but also I just generally think the content of symposia and keynotes and tutorials was worse than the most recent meetings I have attended.

• Again, access to papers or PowerPoints after the conference.

• ASSC should try to maintain its structure as a membership based organization and to benefit from that by getting its members more involved. Students should be more supported (by reducing fees for them, for example) as they are the future and major driving force of ASSC meetings.

• It was a very memorable, exciting, well organized event in this crazy setting. Thanks.

• Tai Pei is a long way to travel for both those in the U.S. and those in Europe.

• No more VIP tables at gala dinners, they send the wrong message...

• Las Vegas is excellent.

• ASSC: Association for Sympathetic Support of Conventional wisdom. (or is it Association for Strenuous Suppression of Controversy?)

• I'm looking forward to next year's meeting better than this year.

• Keep up the good work.

• I thought the conference was very well organized. Many of the talks were really first-rate and I was very glad I attended.

• Great conference. Very glad I attended. I hope to come again.
Las Vegas is not a good city for meeting organization.

Las Vegas is a terrible place to have 'our kind of' conferences. Despite the good food at various restaurants, all that gambling, smoking and drinking made me and my wife sad and depressed. (Don't be mistaken: We love go dancing, good wines etc. - but...) On top of that Imperial Palace is a lousy hotel...The rooms were ok, and the service was fine, BUT simply too many drunk, fat and stupid people (not only Americans) gambling their savings away and burping their sorrows out afterwards in the elevators. We were relieved when Monday 22. finally arrived and we could leave that sad place: Las Vegas. Why not have the ASSC 13 meeting in New York? Or Africa? Or perhaps Casablanca, or Dakar?

No I was happy I came and I’m really glad it wont be in Las Vegas again. The venue did not provide enough opportunity to have down time to think - the hotel rooms were poor and the room air con was loud so it was not a viable alternative. Am looking forward to a place where there is some greenery and quiet next time hopefully.

Travel costs are going to be a big problem for next year - it would be great if some assistance could be identified.

The magic symposium was the best idea I've seen at a conference, bar none.

This conference was optimal in its focus on top-quality plenary/keynote presentations. For me, getting updates on the current science is of great value, and this conference delivered.

The Venue could use improvement. The sound system and extra room conflicting sound were particularly bad, especially since so many presenters had international accents. Use laviler mikes instead.

Excellent job! The organizers generally did a beautiful job under some pretty challenging conditions.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Some of the talks were sufficiently outside my area of experience that I would have liked an option to say "can't say" or "no opinion", rather than being forced to choose "good", "fair", etc.

Specific comments on each talk, maybe.

Specific questions regarding accommodation should be included, as well as some on service, so feedback can be provided as necessary to the host hotel.

Yes! Do not force people to answer 'Did not attend' over and over for sessions which they ... did not attend. This is esp. an issue with the tutorials.

Great questionnaire

Add questions about the quality of the meeting rooms; eg, acoustics, seating, visibility, etc.
Do not make answering all questions mandatory. I don’t like rating my own talk, and nearly gave up at that point.

Include all the symposia in the questionnaire! Leave room for more general comments about technical aspects of the meeting (e.g., where do I say what I thought of the venue etc?)

Some of the questions are loaded. For instance, when you ask whether we would be more likely to attend a banquet costing $50 than $95, you did not indicate that the $50 banquet would be approximately half as good. Failing to supply this information results in a loaded question. Also, in asking whether registration and abstract should be linked, you failed to indicate that abstract submission costs the ASSC approximately $14 to process, whether the abstract is accepted or not (or whether it is withdrawn or not). Printing costs for accepted abstracts are in addition. Linking registrations to abstract submission thus reduces the clutter to only those submitters who are serious about attending.

It's a very good questionnaire

I think that this system is good.

It is easier to answer for each question if related pictures were shown at same time.

Fix q 27 :-) otherwise great

Ask about the hotel, not just about the reception and banquet.

General format (and timing) of the sessions and the timing is a variable... see 26.

Comments:

* Foremost, the questionnaire should have proofreaders to ensure no program item is missing in the future. This was a serious omission that could have been prevented by some oversight.
* The suggestion that ‘no opinion’ be added as an option seems a good one. In the ASSC-10 Report, Patrick Wilken argued persuasively that questions must be mandatory in order to get adequate data. Rather than compromise the data by leaving the question blank, the option to withhold judgment would provide an additional form of information that could prove useful.6
* Another valuable suggestion is to incorporate a question about the venue. A question about accommodations would probably also be helpful, particularly when there is a specific hotel associated with the conference.

ASSC-11 LAS VEGAS CONFERENCE SURVEY

1. What is your membership status with the ASSC?
   ASSC Full Member
   ASSC Affiliate Member
   ASSC Student Member

6 Readers who feel strongly about this issue should contact Paula Droegge (pdroegge@psu.edu) before ASSC-12. Otherwise, this change will go into effect for next year’s survey.
Non-Member (can be either student/non-student)

2. What is your main involvement with the conference? Please select the response that is most relevant.
   Keynote speaker
   Plenary speaker in a symposium
   Speaker in concurrent session
   Presenter of a poster
   Interested observer

3. Please choose the best response that describes you.
   I am a computer scientist
   I am a neuroscientist
   I am a philosopher
   I am a psychologist
   I am an interested member of the public
   Other, Please Specify

4. Which ASSC meetings have you attended in the past? Please select all that apply.
   ASSC1: Los Angeles (1997)
   ASSC2: Bremen (1998)
   ASSC4: Brussels (2000)
   ASSC5: Durham, North Carolina (2001)
   ASSC6: Barcelona (2002)
   ASSC7: Memphis (2003)
   ASSC9: Caltech (2005)
   This is my first ASSC meeting

5. How would you rate the student social event held on Saturday night?
   Poor
   Fair
   Good
   Excellent
   Did not attend

6. Would you participate in a mentoring program, where senior researchers are paired with students?
   Researcher, yes
   Researcher, no
   Student, yes
   Student, no
   Other, please specify

7. Do you have any suggestions for how students could be better served by next year's meeting?
8. How would you rate the quality of the tutorials you attended?

1 Poor
2 Fair
3 Good
4 Excellent

did not attend

M1 Hakwan Lau: The Scope and Limits of Brain Imaging in Consciousness Research
M2 Frederique de Vignemont & Roblin Meeks: Representing and misrepresenting the body
M3 John-Dylan Haynes: Reading conscious and unconscious mental states from human brain activity
M4 Russell T. Hurlburt & Eric Schwitzgebel: Can inner experience be faithfully described?
A5 Olivia Carter & Michael Silver: The Pharmacology of Perception
A6 Dorothée Legrand & Perrine Ruby: What is self-specific? A tutorial questioning the cerebral correlates of the self
A7 Naotsugu Tsuchiya & Christof Koch: The relationship between top-down attention and consciousness
A8 Axel Cleeremans & Morten Overgaard: “Measuring consciousness”: Combining objective and subjective data, and what it may all mean

9. If you were at any of the workshop sessions do you have any specific comments (good or bad) about the sessions you attended?

10. Do you have any suggestions for future workshop presenters or topics?

11. How would you rate the overall quality and relevance of the talks you attended?
1 Poor
2 Fair
3 Good
4 Excellent

Did not attend

Michael Gazzaniga: The Structure of Human Consciousness
Luiz Pessoa: Affective vision: Prioritization does not imply automaticity
Alison Gopnik: Why Babies Are More Conscious Than We are
Marvin Chun: Probing Unconscious Perception and Memory with Functional Brain Imaging
Sid Kouider: A neural perspective on the levels of processing associated with unconscious perception
David Rosenthal: Consciousness and Its Function

12. Do you have any suggestions for future keynote speakers, or comments about the keynote talks you attended?

13. How would you rate the plenary symposia you attended?
1 Poor
2 Fair
3 Good
4 Excellent
did not attend

Symposium 1: 2006 Tom Slick Research Award in consciousness (Dennett, Gazzaniga, Saenz, Hoeft)
Symposium 2: Cortical Networks and Conscious Awareness (Ishai, Malach, Tononi)
Symposium 3: Animal Consciousness: Towards a Scientific Description and Natural History (Edelman, Seth, Pepperberg, Merker, Fiorito)

14. How would you rate the Special Symposium on the Magic of Consciousness?
Poor
Fair
Good
Excellent

15. Do you have any comments about the symposia you attended or suggestions for future symposia topics?

16. Overall how would you rate the quality of the concurrent talks you heard?
Fair
Good
Excellent
Did not attend

17. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality and presentation of the concurrent talks?

18. Overall how would you rate the quality of the posters you saw?
Poor
Fair
Good
Excellent
Did not attend

19. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the quality and presentation of the posters in future meetings?

20. How would you rate the overall quality of the opening reception at the Canaletto in the Venetian Resort-Casino?
Poor
Fair
Good
Excellent
Did not attend

21. Do you have any comments about this year's reception or suggestions for next year's reception in Taiwan?
22. How did you find the quality of the food and wine at this year's Gala Banquet at the Zeffirino Restaurant?
Poor
Fair
Good
Excellent
Did not attend

23. The cost of this year's banquet was $95. Would you be more likely to attend if the banquet were less expensive (say, $50)?

24. Do you have any comments or suggestions for next year's banquet?

25. Are there specific topics and/or speakers that you recommend for future conferences?

26. Do you recommend any changes in the format of the conference. For instance, the length of conference, days of the week in which it is held, length and timing of sessions, and so on?

27. Do you think conference registration should be mandatory with abstract submission? Please include any additional comments about the registration process.

28. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve this questionnaire for next year's meeting?

29. Do you have any other final thoughts or suggestions?