Assc-10 Meeting Report

Patrick Wilken

Overview

Assc-10 was held between 23rd and 26th of June 2006 at St. Anne’s College, Oxford. The Assc-10 meeting started with an optional first day of tutorials, with the main meeting commencing on the evening of the 23rd. The conference website is archived at http://assc.caltech.edu. There were 316 attendees to the main conference. Attendance at the conference peaked for the presidential address by Dennett on the Friday evening of the conference, and then gradually declined over the rest of the meeting.

Feedback was solicited after the conference from all 316 attendees, and 184 responded (58% completion rate, consistent across different categories of attendees e.g. speaker, symposium speaker, keynote etc). This report is based on the feedback received, together with informal conversations between the author and conference attendees.

This report has been written with several different readers in mind, but in particular it has been designed to be useful for future conference organizers. If there are any gaps in the text that would be

1 Many thanks to the conference committee (Tim Bayne and Buracas Giedrius) and the conference chair (Geraint Rees) for comments on an earlier draft.

2 Of the 316 attendees, 160 chose to stay in at St. Anne’s College. All tutorials had greater than 20 attendees.

3 To avoid potential biases, and out of respect for those who took the time to respond to the conference survey, nearly all comments (>99%) are included (a couple of personal attacks on individuals were removed from the text). These comments are raw as they were received, the only changes were to attempt to structure them thematically, and correct spelling errors and other minor typos. While this does cause a fair amount of repetition in some places, the repetition does at least serve the purpose of emphasizing points of general agreement.
useful for future organizers please let me know\(^4\) and an improved version will be generated. The vast bulk of the text is written by the attendees of the ASSC-10 meeting when filling out the survey online in the two weeks immediately following the conference. The high completion rate shows the strong support for the meeting. At various places in the text are comments/suggestions by the author, these are intended as exactly that, and are not expected to carry further weight with future conference organizers, and are do not to represent an official view of the ASSC board.

While the report does assess the perceived quality of individual tutorials, keynotes, and symposia, this is always as a way of focusing on the choices made by program committee (and by inference the Board in its selection of that committee), not on any individuals presenting. The primary questions being asked are: which choices by the committee worked, which didn’t, and if not why not, and how can we do better next time?

**Demographics**

Of the 184 respondents, 80% were ASSC members (32% full members, 33% student affiliates, 16% non-student affiliates). Respondents came from the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Total attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested observer</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster presenter</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent session speaker</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symposium speaker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote speaker(^5)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since it has been commonly assumed that attendees will need to present in order to get conference fees to attend, it is noteworthy that one third of respondents (the largest single category) list themselves as interested observers.

Respondents were drawn from multiple disciplines as follows:

\(^4\) pwilken@gmail.com

\(^5\) In this report the keynote category contains invited keynotes speakers (4), plus the presidential address (1), the James Prize winner (1) and the welcoming address (1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosopher</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroscientist</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer scientist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of public</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cognitive neuroscientist (3); Theologian (1); Economist (1); Biologist (3); Law librarian (1); Neuropsychologist (2); Medical profession (3); Musicologist (1); Journalist/publisher (3); Cognitive Anthropologist (1); Mathematician (2); Behavioural scientist working in animal welfare (2); Mixed category (1).

Ninety respondents (49%) had never attended a previous ASSC meeting. Of the 51% who had, the distribution was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSC1</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC2</td>
<td>Bremen</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC3</td>
<td>London, Ontario</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC4</td>
<td>Brussels</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC5</td>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC6</td>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC7</td>
<td>Memphis</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC8</td>
<td>Antwerp</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSC9</td>
<td>Caltech</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments/suggestions:

i. It pleasing that attendance was so high at ASSC-10. Unfortunately, incomplete records from meetings held prior to ASSC-8 do not allow an exact comparison of attendance across years. However, it is clear that this year’s meeting had the largest attendance since at least ASSC-4. It may be that given this is the tenth meeting that there may be an anniversarv effect working here, however, an examination of prior attendance at meetings, shows a clear bi-modal distribution, suggesting a swell in membership attendance from around ASSC-6/7 and continuing through to the present meeting.

ii. I would suggest that in the immediate future organizers create (conservative) budgets on the assumption of having no more than 250 attendees, of which 40% are students, and 95% attendees pay early registration.
iii. I would also suggest that approximately 250-350 attendees is about optimal for a meeting such the ASSC and no attempt should be made to grow the meeting substantially beyond its current size. Numbers may be constrained by placing upper limits on the number of talks and posters accepted.

iv. As in previous years approximately half the attendees are at their first ASSC meeting. It is worth emphasizing the value of orientating activities for these new attendees (e.g., welcome address, student social).

v. As at ASSC-8 and ASSC-9, the number of philosophers attending the meeting has been around 20%-30%. It is suggested that future levels of philosophical content in the meeting be roughly around this level, and certainly no more than 1/3 of total content at the meeting.

**Academic Content**

**Tutorials**

Eight tutorials were offered this year at Oxford. Tutorials were held in morning and afternoon sessions lasting three hours. Participants paid £35 to attend a single tutorial; each tutorial had an associated honorarium of £350, to be divided equally amongst presenters.

M1 Eduard Marbach: Phenomenological methods for investigating consciousness

M2 Kevin O'Regan: The sensorimotor approach to phenomenal consciousness revisited

M3 Nao Tsuchiya & Christof Koch: The relationship between selective attention and consciousness

M4 Rolf Verleger: Event-related EEG potential correlates of conscious perception: The P3 and N2pc components

A1 Igor Aleksander, Ron Chrisley, and Murray Shanahan: Machine models of consciousness

A2 Alan Cowey: Exploring aspects of consciousness by TMS

A3 David Edelman and Anil Seth: A scientific framework for the study of animal consciousness

A4 David Rosenthal: Higher-Order Theories of consciousness

Tutorial ratings by respondents are presented below, ranked from left to right in terms of overall score.\(^7\)

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\(^6\) Unlike ASSC8 or ASSC9 no discount was offered to for attending two tutorials due to implementation problems by CPD

\(^7\) Error bars in this and all subsequent figures represent one standard error of the mean.
The tutorials were generally very well received with seven out of eight tutorials receiving a weighted average response greater than 3.0 indicating the median response was in the “good” to “excellent” range. The best-received tutorial was Cowey (3.6), followed by Aleksander (3.5), Tsuchiya & Koch

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8 In order to offer ready comparisons between presentations (both within and between years) in addition to providing the raw rankings of talks a weighted average ranking is provided for each presentation. This was generated in the following manner: all presentations were evaluated by respondents as either “poor”, “fair”, “good” or “excellent”. These rankings were converted to a 1-4 score. The weighted average ranking gives an indication of the average evaluation given to a presentation. A score higher than 3.0 indicates that the
(3.5), Edelman & Seth (3.3), O'Regan (3.3), Rosenthal (3.2), and Marbach (3.0). Only Verleger (2.7) received a weighted response lower than 3.0.

Lack of time for discussion
- There was too much content for too little time - too fast a tempo (not good for beginners) and too little discussion.
- I was hoping that there would be opportunities for discussion - there was pretty much none, so it was more like a lecture. Also, the organizer spent too much time on background stuff and not enough time on the most important issues.
- A1 [Aleksander] could have done with a little more interaction of the audience
- I thought David Rosenthal rushed through his tutorial and it became hard to follow
- Perhaps it would be good to put the level of the workshop. For example, David Rosenthal’s workshop seemed to be for those already acquainted with his theory - in any case certainly not for the non-philosopher like me.
- For Rosenthal: it would have been more enjoyable to me if the main concern was not to say as much as possible but to have real interaction with the group and the possibility to elaborate deeper on fewer things.
- Not enough discussion time
- I know its difficult but; More discussion less like a lecture.
- More discussion time among participants would have been better. Also, focusing in more detail on specific topics rather than broad survey would have been better.
- Information presented in M4 [Verleger] was very relevant, but the format of workshop was closer to lecture than discussion. It was a bit boring to sit and listen all 3 hours. Again, it was a bit too difficult for novice. A3 [Edelman & Seth] was excellent!

Timing
- Could have gone on longer.
- Not enough time...as usual
- Too short. For it to be really profitable it should be 4 hours long (with a break, of course!)

Technical issues
- The seating wasn't inviting discussions, and the workshop was rather like a lecture first.
- Provide speakers with the opportunity to project their slides.
- The workshop was very interesting and well organized. When I last participated in ASSC in Durham, the workshop participants got a CD with the relevant material (presentation, PDFs, etc.) on the spot which was helpful. Otherwise, it would have been nice to get coffee...

Complaints about lack of space
- Unfortunately I was not able to enroll in any workshops - all the ones I requested were booked by end of May when I applied - need to apply earlier next time.
Specific comments

- Marbach’s was well organized and well presented.
- Marbach’s workshop was interesting, but a bit disorganized. Rosenthal’s preparation and presentation was excellent!
- There was very little content that related to the study of consciousness. For the first half, M. [Marbach] presented Husserl’s phenomenology and for the second half M. [Marbach] presented his own phenomenological logical system.
- The title of Verleger’s workshop was first described as studying visual awareness with ERPs But then the workshop ended up to be much more specific, concentrating on only to some certain components. If I had known that beforehand, I would have chosen some other workshop.
- M3 [Tsuchiya & Koch]: exciting and motivating A4 [Rosenthal]: learned much about consequent theorizing
- Kevin O’Regan’s workshop was well organized with the appropriate mix of discussion and lecture.
- I appreciated the use of films of animals to show language learning and other aspects of animal consciousness.
- Sometimes you call them tutorials, sometimes workshops. I took them to be tutorials. M3 [Tsuchiya & Koch] was too technical for a tutorial. A3 [Edelman & Seth] was ideal as a tutorial.
- The workshop A2 [O’Regan] was very interesting because there were many demonstrations

General positive remarks

- Both workshops were stimulating and worthwhile.
- Just a pity I couldn’t attend more because they were running in parallel.
- A really good idea to run these workshops. More next year please!
- Excellent.

Comments/suggestions:

i. Overall the perceived high quality of the tutorials is pleasing and suggests that the strategy adopted after ASSC-8, of narrowing the selection of tutorial presenters to that of only those suitable of giving a plenary talk, has been successful, and should be continued. It is strongly suggested that for future tutorials at least one co-presenter of each tutorial is relatively senior academic (e.g., for scientists a H-index of at least 15-25).

ii. The overall balance of content in the tutorials was good this year. It is recommended that future years have two philosophical tutorials (one morning/one afternoon). Overall topics should cover quite different areas, but the topics covered should be broad (the worse rated tutorial – Verleger – apparently suffered in part from perceived narrowness of presentation).

iii. Due to perceived time constraints, the final selection of tutorials was made by the two local organizers (Rees & Wilken), rather than via discussion at program committee level. While it is unlikely that the final decision would have differed, both local organizers would retrospectively have preferred that it had gone through the committee.10

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10 All other decisions regarding scientific content (keynotes, symposia etc) were made by the program committee as a whole.
iv. Although tutorials were full it is suggested that the number of tutorials offered, and the
maximum number of attendees per tutorial (20) is not increased; the latter is especially
important as tutorials are meant to be small intimate gatherings, not large lectures.
v. Although some attendees complained about the difficulty of following the content of
some tutorials (e.g., Rosenthal) others in the same tutorial appreciated having this in
depth view. Tutorials cannot cater for all levels of expertise amongst attendees and if a
choice has to be made it should be towards higher quality. This year a great deal of
effort was made to get attendees warmed up for the tutorials, by placing detailed
abstracts about each tutorial on the website, with links to 2-3 core papers online that
should be read prior to the meeting, as well as having tutorial presenters send out
regular emails to attendees to gauge interest and answer pre-tutorial questions
(O’Regan even went so far as to set up a pre-conference wiki for group discussion). It is
recommended that future organizers play close attention to providing detailed
summaries of tutorial content, and links to papers (not simply references). Tutorial
presenters should be given email addresses of organizers at least one month ahead of
the meeting, and with regular updates say at two week intervals in the lead up to the
conference.
vi. The overall cost of tutorial attendance should remain at approximately $50 US, with
the honorarium of $500 plus free registration to the main part of the conference going
to tutorial presenters.
vii. There was an unfortunate tendency for some people who had not paid for tutorials to
walk into tutorials this year. It is recommended that attendees have a tutorial code (e.g.,
a colored symbol) placed on the name tags for easy identification, and also that helpers
are placed on the door of all tutorials to stop non-payers attending. It is important to
note that this is not so much about revenue collection, as keeping a level playing field
for all attendees. The tutorials cost a substantial amount, and many students for instance
cannot get reimbursed for them, it is simply unfair that non-payees take up time at a
tutorial. The general policy has been to allow no free tickets to tutorials, so that even
keynote speakers or ASSC Board members pay if they wish to attend.

Keynote talks
The program committee invited five keynote talks:

Jon Driver: Selective attention, multisensory integration, and perceptual awareness in the normal
and damaged human brain.

J David Smith: Uncertainty monitoring and metacognition by humans and nonhuman animals.

Fred Dretske: What change blindness teaches about consciousness.

Anthony Greenwald: Catching consciousness unaware: Using modus tollens to establish what
conscious cognition does.

Martha Farah: Neuroethics.

In addition, three stand-alone plenary talks are considered in this section:

Welcoming address: Patrick Wilken.

William James Prize lecture: Sang-Hun Lee: The role of attention in propagation of cortical waves
during binocular rivalry.

Presidential lecture: Daniel Dennett: Consciousness: How science changes the subject.

Quality and relevance ratings are presented below, ranked from left to right in terms of overall score.
Moving from left to right in the figure, there is a strong inverse coupling between the "fair" and
"excellent" responses. This supports the view that the overall score for each talk does capture its
perceived quality, and that as the overall score diminishes there is a shift in responses from
"excellent", to "good", to "fair", with respondents perhaps reluctant to use the "poor" response.
Of the five keynotes selected by the program, three received weighted rankings above 3.0: Smith (3.6), Driver (3.3), and Greenwald (3.0), and two did not Dretske (2.6), and Farah (2.3). Of the non-invited keynotes, the welcoming address by Wilken (3.3) and the presidential address by Dennett...
(3.0) were well received; the William James prize talk however was poorly received (2.5).

Speaker clarity

- Sometimes it could be helpful (especially for those who are not native speakers or who are not so familiar with the topics) to reduce the speed of presentation.
- Not so important - but easier: presentations in understandable English.
- Keynote speakers should avoid focusing on technical detail and should speak slowly enough to be understood by non-native speakers of English.
- Keynote talks are quite long and consciousness fades as time goes on, so speakers should really do a better job in communicating their results. Maybe stating the main results first when one is still wide awake and develop the argument later on.

Lack of time for discussion:

- Leave time for discussion The discussion was frequently the most interesting part
- Patrick welcoming address was entertaining and informative, but it ran way over time. This had the effect that there was no time for any discussion of later speakers’ presentations. I think these discussions are important. Daniel Dennett’s talk was an eloquent statement of his philosophical position. It did not match the title of the talk as the content was almost entirely philosophical and had little science content.
- I think the most interesting parts of the lectures came in the debates so perhaps more time for this?
- More room for discussion

Comments about specific talks

- I have an impression that Sang-Hun Lee didn’t know the scope of the audience and went on too long for discussing unnecessary details. I guess the future keynote speakers should be notified, especially if they have not been attended before, the scope of audience and suggested portion of time dedicated in the talk. Like 40% intro, 30% data, 30% discussion & implication for the problem of consciousness, etc.
- If empirical, please do not say “and now here are the experiments I want to tell you about” after 45 minutes [for Lee talk] have already passed!
- Perhaps the William James Award winner should be limited to a 15 min abstract talk. The one this year was deadly.
- Opening good but perhaps a little long. Dennett was Dennett, entertaining at the time.
- Please tell speakers to stick to their story. The Farah switch to neuroethics was really bad.
- Overall the keynotes were excellent. Martha Farah’s was disappointing as it didn’t seem to me to offer any insight or specialist knowledge - it was like a chat down the pub. Particularly frustrating as at that point everyone was keen to get home.
- Perhaps another type of philosopher than Dretske would be better. He is an excellent philosopher, but was misplaced at this meeting.
- I thought the Dretske talk was remarkable for its clarity, but disappointing in not even attempting to consider the scientific literature on the topic. (Can that be asked of future speakers as a prerequisite for speaking at the conference?) I thought Martha Farah addressed some critical issues and it would be great to highlight ethical issues in a future conference (e.g., around animal experimentation and farming; end of life care, testing on brain damaged individuals, etc).
- Dretske is an admired philosopher; he just chose the wrong topic for that type of audience.

Relevance

- We really need some sort of standard by which to assess relevance. Ask yourself: what psychology experiment or psychophysics experiment is NOT relevant to consciousness? Unless we are very clear on
what it is we are trying to study, the answer to this question converges toward "none".

Philosophy

- Philosophers who talk about an empirical topic (presumably referring to Dretske) should take the major facts of research into account.
- For philosophers, would be good to have main session speakers who are linking up with empirical work - at least for some sessions.

Women presenters

- More women giving substantive talks rather than fringe ones.
- Only 1 woman out of 8 speakers, is this really fair?

General comments

- Even if it doesn't seem to be the case from my rates: Overall, I found the keynotes good this year - well balanced and interesting and relevant topics.
- I thought ASSC10 had a good balance of speakers.
- Some invited speakers have never attended ASSC. This leads to a problem, I think, because some of them assume the conference isn't as scientifically serious as it is. There's probably no easy solution, because we can't just invite "in bred" speakers. But maybe we should warn new speakers.
- Less stand up comedies more content. More room for discussion less information more development.
- It's a pity that some speakers use PowerPoint like slides, i.e. that they project everything at once on the screen, instead of using animation and projecting the sentences or graphs they are talking about one after another.
- I have talked with several people at the meeting about the scheduling of evening talks. We need a break to eat in the evening. Often sessions went on quite late so we were starving. Either give us a break to eat dinner and come back for evening sessions properly or end a bit early. The lecture theater at the University Museum was too full and I think it probably violated some sort of fire code. Again, the talks were great but we were trapped in there for hours without food or water. Sorry to be so concerned with low-level things but it does affect ones' attention.

Comments/suggestions:

i. Overall most keynotes scored well, with people liking the overall balance of speakers: only Dretske, Farah and the William James Prize winner (Lee) scored below 3.0. In general successful speakers are not only entertaining, but provide a substantial amount of content relevant to the study of consciousness. It may be worth emphasizing to future keynotes the sophisticated nature of the audience.

ii. Both Dretske and Farah are very senior, well respected academics, whose work is of particular relevance to the ASSC, it is therefore unfortunate that their talks were not better received, but their selection by the program committee seems to have been a wise one. Farah’s talk was apparently disliked because it was seen as too insubstantial; Dretske’s talk was disliked (at least by the scientists) at least in part by his use of empirical examples, which did not jive with the available data.

iii. Given its poor reception, there has been some discussion about shortening the William James address substantially in future years. This would seem to be short-sighted: the previous two speakers (Steven Laureys and Hakwan Lau) both gave excellent addresses, and both speakers continued involvement in the association can in part be associated with the substantive nature of their prize (which includes airfare and keynote address at the meeting). My suggestion is to continue the James prize as is for at least two more years, and then assess whether changes need to be made to the format.

iv. The opening session on the Friday evening (comprising the welcoming address, William James Prize speaker and presidential address) was generally seen as too long. Both the
Welcome and Presidential address should remain on the first day, but the James Prize winner moved to one of the other keynote spots on the program. Putting this talk on late in the program (Sunday/Monday – though not as the last speaker) may be an advantage as it would allow the prize winner (who has probably never attended a previous ASSC meeting) time to view other talks and get a sense of the audience that they are presenting to.

v. The welcoming address was well received. It is recommended that this be continued for future meetings (esp. since there are no other forums for members to hear about or discuss the ASSC at the meeting). It’s suggested that the format of the welcoming address be changed from half-an-hour slot (which was too short this year) to a full hour, with perhaps half an hour left open for questions from the membership; if there are no questions this time can be used as a buffer to allow the presidential address to begin on time.

vi. Timing of talks continues to be a problem, with many speakers finishing talks so close to time that they are unable to answer questions without going past their allotted hour. Speakers should be requested to keep strictly to time (though the effectiveness of this seems doubtful). One solution may be to tell keynote speakers that they have 45 minutes to speak (rather than telling them that they have an hour slot) since few seem to take the request to leave 10-15 minute free for question time seriously. Chairs should be requested to keep strictly to time (and chairs who fail this duty not be invited to chair future sessions). Particularly problematic this year was Dretske’s session whose question time went 30 minutes past the hour. This had the unfortunate effect of robbing presenters in the second poster session of 25% of their time.

vii. As in previous years there have been questions about relative lack of women keynote speakers. There is little that can be added directly about this issue other than to state that the program committee takes this issue seriously, but will not offer positive discrimination to women speakers. Future program committees would welcome suggestions for future female (and male) speakers. It is important to note that this issue only applies to the selection of keynote, and not symposia speakers, since the latter are nominated by members and the program committee can only decide on symposia proposals on the basis of quality and relevance, not gender composition.

Members symposia

Twelve member’s symposia were submitted to the program committee. Of these three member’s symposia were presented at the meeting:

Symposium 1: Recurrent processing and visual consciousness (Walsh, Lamme, Block, Lau)
Symposium 3: Action, perception, and consciousness (Farne, Kelly, Milner)
Symposium 4: Brain-reading of consciousness (Haynes, Goebel, Metzinger, de Vignemont)

In addition, as at ASSC-9, a special symposia was held for winners for the Mind-Science Foundation’s Tom Slick award:

Symposium 2: 2005 Tom Slick Research Award in consciousness (Koch, Blascovich, Schurger, Snodgrass)

Who within the context of a symposium can be much more junior than a stand-alone keynote speaker.
All the symposia were well received: Tom Slick (3.5), Brain-reading (3.4), Recurrent processing (3.4), and Action and perception (3.1).

Format

- Leave time for discussion
- The discussion was frequently the most interesting part

Specific comments

- I found Symposium 1 [Recurrent processing] particularly exciting for the interplay of ideas between philosophers and scientists. Ned Block's distinction between P and A consciousness and the scientists' similar concepts. I would have liked a little more time for discussion at the end of each symposium.
- The following were great: Walsh, Farne. The following talks were disappointing: Kelly, de Vignemont, Schurger, Snodgrass.
- Symposia 2 [Tom Slick Award] was a bit eclectic. Good speakers though. Symposia 3 [Action and perception] was excellent. Perfect mix of neuroscience and philosophers!
- I'm quite satisfied with the selection of the speakers in symposia 1, 2, and 4. Compared to the previous meetings, I found philosopher's presentation is getting better (i.e., Block very good, Metzinger quite clear, de Vignemont - ok (but too strong French accent...)). I couldn't stand somebody who just talked, talked, and talked. They should at least prepare the talk if the opportunity is given. If the talk itself was clear, I wouldn't complain, but I don't remember anything he said. Don't you want to give us a rating for each
15

Symposium 4 [Brain-reading] cannot be rated in this way: The first two talks were excellent, but Metzinger & de Vignemont were really delivering philosophy 101 talks.

Blascovich and Goebel were not really relevant to consciousness; de Vignemont seemed to create a problem where there wasn't really one. Overall a good and interesting mix, but talks should put emphasis on the relevance for consciousness.

Symposium 2: Koch was o.k. (but too much), Blascovich was o.k., but the two others were incredibly poor. Symposium 3: Farné was o.k., I did not attend at the other two speakers.

I particularly liked the "balancing" of pro and con viewpoints in the 4th [Brain-reading] and 1st [Recurrent processing] symposia.

I found the philosophy talks generally of lesser quality: a lot of old debates, elaborating on the same pro- and cons, while there is so much happening in philosophy that could be interesting to the consciousness debate nowadays, in particular in phenomenology (Gallagher, Zahavi, De Preester, Depraz).

Content

Again, relevance is a problem. Brain reading, for example, is not necessarily about consciousness. You could describe it as “reading out information encoded in neural dynamics that correlates with the kind of stimulus that is being processed”, and not lose anything (i.e. without ever invoking the concept of consciousness). It becomes relevant when we control for non-conscious neural information processing. Just like any scientific experiment, we try to manipulate the variable of interest (namely awareness or consciousness) and try our best to hold other variables constant. The majority of the work presented did not meet this criteria wrt to consciousness. On the other hand, some work is indirectly relevant to consciousness research for various other reasons (like that of J. David Smith), so this should be taken into account as well.

I would appreciate if the abstracts and the content of individual presentations would be more consistent.

General changes

Enhance the chair’s role. Have them introduce more formally the speaker and the topic. After each talk they should initiate the discussion on any differences raised by the speakers, do not leave it up to the presenters themselves. It would be helpful to have an eloquent person as a dedicated chair for all the symposia to build a good rapport with the audience.

I thought this year’s selection was excellent. Mixing approaches to a topic within each symposium (instead of segregating them into e.g. imaging vs. modeling vs. philosophy) made it easier to sustain attention for the whole time.

I’m ambivalent about the proper role for philosophers in symposia. Their best place would seem to be as commentators on the science presented, but in practice this time that led to superficial responses. So their other role could be as presenters of their own views, when these have been developed to enough depth to warrant a useful full presentation. Future topics could include neurophenomenology (and Marbach could be a speaker), psychiatric conditions like schizophrenia, MPD, PTSD, etc., “altered states”.

Most, not all, people often, all too often, speak much too fast - less quantity would probably yield more quality.

The symposia were the best part of the conference.

My relatively low rating for symposium 3 is simply because I can’t remember it, so it can’t have made as much impression on me as the others.

The data were often interesting but by and large everyone missed the point; what does it actually tell us about consciousness that was not clear enough in 1906?

An interesting topic could be on free will and the timing of events in the brain.

The topics were very interesting.
Comments/discussion:

i. Overall the symposia were well received. However, it is important to note that the program committee makes a selection based on what is submitted, and does not generate new proposals. This year the committee rapidly settled on four possible submissions out a total of twelve. While the end result was good, it would be better if the committee had more choice. It is suggested that the executive board and other involved members of the association encourage the submission of symposia. This is likely to lead to a substantive increase in the quality of the proposals at the meeting.

ii. One problem occurred during the discussion of the symposia: It was found that after one of the proposals had been short-listed for consideration that not all the speakers listed in the proposal had agreed to take part. At that point out of fairness to other submissions the committee should have rejected the proposal outright, but the chair (under protest) allowed the submitter to re-contact the listed speakers. In future it is strongly recommended that symposia be rejected without further consideration if it is found that not all the listed speakers have agreed to take part.

iii. As at Caltech the Tom Slick Award symposium was the highest ranked symposia at the meeting. However, it is suggested that its length be shortened to two-hours, and three speakers (the same as the other three symposia), allowing time for one extra keynote.

Concurrent talks

As in previous years, all conference committee members voted on the abstracts of all talks and posters (N = 230) 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 36 talk slots; the top 24 ranked empirical talks, and 12 ranked philosophical proposals.
requesting a talk slot were initially considered for a slot.\textsuperscript{15}\textsuperscript{16} Proposals from people that had presented at the previous year’s meeting were rejected for a talk slot on the grounds of fairness (nearly all 230 proposals listed an oral presentation as their first preference), and to avoid the potential problem of creating too strong an in-group at meetings (6 out of 12 of the highest ranked philosophical talk proposals were from people who had presented the year before; however, this problem was much less evident within the empirical stream where only 3 out of 24 talks were from repeat presenters).\textsuperscript{17}

The raw cut-off score\textsuperscript{18} for a talk was 3.6 out of 4.0 or a z-score of 0.6 (mean raw score 4.1, z-score 1.0). 22 talks out of 230 proposals were rejected (10%). The overall threshold for rejection was a raw score of 2.2 or a z-score of -1.1 (mean raw score for reject 1.7, z-score -1.7). The mean score for posters was 3.3 (z-score 0.2).

The overall ranking of concurrent talks (3.2) was good.

**Movement between sessions**

- Place them all in the same building so that people can move between them.

\textsuperscript{15} Note that this is not a reflection that talks were considered to be in some sense ‘better’ than poster presentations. Ranking and selection simply determines how to allocate the more limited number of talk slots efficiently and fairly.

\textsuperscript{16} As concurrent streams are organized thematically talks that were ranked particularly highly, but had fallen below the initial 36 talk cut-off were also considered after an attempt was made to organize the initial set of talks. To offer a fairer comparison of rankings between program committee members ranking raw scores were converted to z-scores and the mean z-score used to rank proposals.

\textsuperscript{17} While the initial composition of the symposia did not have any repeat speakers, after a number of cancellations two repeat speakers did receive talk slots (Ehrsson – empirical, and Klein – philosophical).

\textsuperscript{18} Neither the talk-poster nor poster-reject thresholds were absolute. Scores were seen as guides, not as absolute judgements on quality, so a few lower ranked proposals passed a threshold that others with higher scores did not.
It was impossible to move between them because of the geography, which was a big problem. 

Adjust logistics so attendees can move easily between concurrent sessions.

Finally, it was bad at this meeting that one concurrent session was always so far away from the others that one could not switch between sessions.

Split site made it hard to mix and match when interests overlapped different topics.

Make sure changing locality from one presentation to another is readily possible - this time, one group was too far away (at St. Anne’s) from the others...

Having to walk between St. Anne’s and the Martin Wood lecture theater was a bit annoying if you wanted to go to talks in different concurrent sessions.

Timing of sessions/discussion

It’s a bit silly that the concurrent sessions *always* start late and *always* run over; this produces needless stress. Since startup and transition times are unavoidable, it might make sense to allow for them in the schedule. (Perhaps that’s already the case, but if so, the chairs and presenters don’t know it; we all assumed the goal was a full 30 minutes per presenter.)

Leave time for discussion. Find good moderators.

Have less material, talk slower and better structured

A lot of discussion happened after the talks. Often, this discussion was very interesting. However, since many speakers crossed their time limit, it was often only possible to ask one or two questions. I thought this was a limitation of the conference. The discussion was a bit lost. I feel that organizing discussion sessions or debates between the different speakers could solve this problem.

More room for discussion.

There were timing issues throughout the conferences - nearly every session over-ran, so that our coffee breaks and lunches were cut short - and these breaks are important to maintain attention!

Given the demand, you might want to increase the number of speakers (how about 5 20min talks rather than 4 30min)? Having said this, time limits were too often not enforced in the sessions.

Chairing

Have the concurrent session host NOT be a speaker! Avoids (unconscious?) conflicts of interest that way. E.g., not allowing Qs for another speaker, but taking many for oneself, etc.

Chairs were not very active - allowed talks to run on over breaks and made it difficult to drop in and out to catch different topics, also cut into mingling and question time.

Pre-determined chairs, that are at least as firm as Wilken in keeping people on time (the fourth speaker was very hurried, which is unfair).

Technical problems

Surprisingly difficult to get all the AV support working properly. Lost time in what are already tight sessions.

Less technical problems! A bit more time for questions after each speaker. Otherwise, I liked the format

Perhaps some technical assistance would be good to ensure that things do not get delayed with projector trouble.

Speakers should be able to ensure that their equipment is working correctly before they begin the talk.

Desire for interdisciplinary sessions

It might be better to set topics for the concurrent sessions in advance. Also, why not mix philosophers and scientists in the concurrent sessions.
I wonder why there is a section called Philosophy - under the premise that we are doing interdisciplinary work, it should be possible to classify every talk by the topic, even philosophers' talks...

Having separate philosophy sections does usually encourage a concentrated philosophy audience, but a better mix of philosophers and scientists (under a different concurrent session title) might lead to more interdisciplinary interaction.

It would be nice to mix the different disciplines more within sessions. I am interested in philosophy, but not enough to choose a whole session of it over a psychology session.

Miscellaneous

- Give presenters guidelines with regard to abstract/content of the talk, duration of the talk, ask philosophers to use PowerPoint to support their talks.
- Concurrent talks were by and large very good.
- Accept philosophers only when they have something to offer other than their opinions.
- As above - relevance for consciousness research should be emphasized, less focus on visual system/color, try to include more innovative approaches (I don’t see why most of the philosophy talks should be on colors/vision).
- It is very good that student speakers were presenting.
- Not everyone has an in depth understanding of neuropsychology methods, techniques, findings … keeping the topics higher level with key findings would be a better use of the time.
- The quality was very hit or miss in the philosophy sessions.
- These were uneven. Unfortunately it was my own discipline of philosophy that seemed most variable.
- It is bound to be a variety. Always good to concentrate on good speakers.

Comments/suggestions:

i. While the overall score was good (3.2) there were complaints about the overall quality of some talks. Complaints about quality seemed particularly linked to the philosophy stream. It is strongly suggested that the number of current talks remains at 36 and is not increased; despite some requests to the contrary.

ii. One concurrent session was held at St. Anne’s College, and the other two sessions in the Martin Woods complex (approximately 10 minutes walk from the college). This was unfortunate, but unavoidable due to constraints placed by the location. It would (obviously) be much more desirable to hold all three concurrent sessions within close proximity to allow easy movement between sessions. To avoid the possibility that any one concurrent stream was isolated over the three days, different streams were rotated between the college and the Martin Woods complex.

iii. Judging by the number of comments timing of concurrent sessions was again an issue.

One reason for this is that people are poor at arriving to the start of sessions on time. This results in some sessions starting a little late, while the chair waits for sufficient people to be present, which in turn leads to timing problems later. One solution here would be instruct chairs to start promptly on time no matter how many people are present at the session; this is tough on the first speaker, but may instil a sense of better timing by attendees. Another suggestion is to avoid chairs that have a talk within the session they are chairing. Originally it was intended that people would have 20 minutes to speak, and 10 for discussion. However, speakers continue to want to use close to the full 30 minutes to talk; there is little to be done about this (though speakers could be told that they have 20 minute presentations, not 30 minute sessions). Chairs should be given very strict instructions to switch talks on time, and importantly to use the actual

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19 A particular concern was that the philosophy stream might be isolated, which it was felt would seem bad symbolically.
time (e.g., 2.30pm), not wait until 30 minutes have passed from the start of speaker’s presentation. It may be worth considering making some student helpers dedicated chairs over the three days (i.e., three people chair three sessions each) as they are more likely to keep to strict time than regular attendees.

iv. One philosophy session at St. Anne’s had to be moved to another lecture theatre when the AV died at the start of the session, resulting in the first talk being delivered without the accompanying PowerPoint slides, and the whole stream being delayed by 15 minutes. Other than this there were apparently few AV problems. This was in part due to the dedicated AV support available during all sessions in the Martin Woods complex. It would be helpful to have a one-page sheet of paper detailing AV setup that chairs could use.

v. Some people have argued for more interdisciplinary sessions. I do not feel this a good suggestion. Invariably the language of concurrent talks is going to be more technical and more inaccessible than keynote/plenary talks. This is true even within fields (cognitive and molecular neuroscientists have little to say to each other), but it is perhaps even truer between philosophy and the empirical sciences. The language between these two fields is too different to allow an effective mixing of sessions, and the problems being dealt with are probably too disparate to allow for effective discussion.

vi. One suggestion would be to scrap the loose thematic themes for the empirical sessions and simply give the top ranked empirical proposals talks, with untitled empirical streams as is already done with philosophy. The main advantage of this is it would be fairer and easier to implement. As it stands the current sessions titles are fairly loose anyway so little might be lost and the overall quality of talks might be slightly improved.

Posters

Of the 172 proposals that were offered a poster slot, 133 accepted (77%). There was no apparent bias between philosophers and non-philosophers in accepting a poster slot when their first preference had been an oral presentation.

There were two 2-hour poster sessions, held on late afternoon on Saturday and Sunday. The poster sessions were held in a marquee of St. Anne’s College. Posterboards were 1 m wide x 2 m long (door shaped), and rented at a cost of £25 per board; there were 66 posters per session, or 33 boards rented per session.

A new philosophy poster prize was set-up this year to encourage philosophers to present in this novel format. Dan Dennett chaired the prize committee, which was composed of himself, Ned Block, Alva Noë, and Robert van Gulick. There were three winners for this year’s prize:

- Rasmus Thybo Jensen, Copenhagen, "Motor Intentionality and the Case of Schneider".

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20 This would be another argument for having dedicated chairs over the three days of concurrent sessions.
21 As the marquee also housed the registration desk and lunches this had the nice effect that posters were likely to be viewed after the poster session ended.
22 Because the boards had to be eventually doubled up this raised the cost of some boards to £50.
23 It is interesting to note that while posters were advertised to philosophers as props for the presentation of short five minute talks, the philosophy poster prize judges mostly only read the posters and moved on without interacting. This may have been due to the sheer number of posters presented. If so, a means should be found to lower the burden of judging to allow the judges to talk to interact with all the eligible presenters.
The overall ranking of posters (3.0) was good.

**Format of posters**

- The poster board set up was generally poor and unprofessional. About half of the posters had not enough space. Especially those along the curtains in the Marquee.
- Too much text in too many posters. Perhaps provide samples of good short ones.
- Emphasize how important it is to have very little text on the posters.
- It was great how everybody came along to the poster sessions.
- Many of the posters were far too wordy.
- Still some issues with too much text on philosophy posters.
- Almost all the talks I saw were of a very high standard, so I was surprised that the posters were disproportionately poor in many instances. All I can think to suggest is that you have some "invited" posters that will help to drive up the standard. Also, a poster competition for students? (or do you have one already?)
- Limit the number of words?

**Lack of space**

- A bit more room! Many posters were squashed in very little space (on the other hand, the confined space made it somewhat cozy).
- There was too little room for the poster session. Also, there should be more information on how the posterboard look like. I was not aware that the posterboards were going all the way to the ground. I would have expected them to be on some sort of support.
- The space was much too crowded; some of the posters were just very difficult to get to.
Not in a marquee - poor ventilation!

Give sufficient space so that people can actually see the posters presented without having to push through the masses.

The space for posters was too small which meant some posters shunted right up against a wall, making them rather inaccessible

More space

Less posters, bigger room,

More space, if available, so as not to be too crowded.

more space and more time!

Make more ground surface available for the posters that were facing the sides of the tent.

More space for posters.

Exceptionally good posters this year. I liked last year’s strategy of putting out snacks in the middle of the poster session to encourage people to linger. Physically, I liked this year’s crowded format; when they're too spread out, it gets desolate. Crowding makes it easier for the poster presenters to interact with each other while still staying in range of their posters.

Allow a little more space to walk round them, if possible. It was very good to display them in a space that was used during breaks, so there was plenty of time to look at them.

The poster layout was too constricted. It was difficult to talk with poster presenters throughout the sessions—particularly those who were behind the walls.

The layout is very important. There was too much congestion because of the narrow gaps between the posters and the walls of the marquee.

It was probably due to limited space, but I think passing the narrow passages behind the posters and reading them was quite uncomfortable.

it was not fair that half the posters where open to the whole room, much more visible and accessible while the other half were close to the wall. the room and setup should be such to facilitate equal exposure.

I think that for many presenters the poster presentation did suffer from the premises - there was no space and the air was extremely bad.

the presentation should take place in a bigger room with more space to breathe, and half of the posters should not be only 4 feet distant from the walls, as were half of them

There should be greater separation and more space around the posters.

Bigger space needed (rather than less posters) - it was hard to navigate in the tent. Posters should be out there for a longer time.

A bit more space (and not holding a major football tournament at the same time!)

Give instructions concerning the format (size) of the posters. Perhaps organized by thematic

I thought the layout of the poster area was poor. I think the middle of the room could have been better utilized. People who were placed next to the tent wall were extremely restricted. I was happy with my location and the reception I received.

Mode of display was just adequate. Lighting conditions in poster venue were not ideal.

Maybe allow a bit more space to circulate around some of the posters...

Obviously, it would have been nice to have had more space - it was far too crowded!

Grouping thematically

Group them by topic rather than by alphabet.
• Maybe grouping philosophy posters? Also liked the idea in Antwerp of having posters during a walking lunch. By having them at the end of the day, people can be a bit too tired.

• Provide categories thus making the spatial visits more organized and giving the audience the chance of being more selective, since the time was obviously not enough to attend all the posters.

Quality

• Be more selective

• Harder selection.

• Any attempt to police the quality of posters more tightly is a VERY BAD IDEA. The study of consciousness is in its infancy, and some seemingly fringe ideas may turn out to be correct. It is far better to put up with some posters that are junk than to risk throwing away a single gem. The field of Consciousness studies is not yet mature enough for a small committee, no matter how eminent, to be able to judge quality. I would have liked a further opportunity to see the four prizewinning posters.

• Many of them were (very) interesting but did not really related to consciousness.

• As far as I could see, there were very few bad posters, and a lot of them were very good.

• Posters were very good, very interesting stuff there, not enough time to attend to all of them - when you present a poster yourself, no time to go see the other posters

Philosophy poster prize

• Good idea to have poster competitions.

• There was a poster prize for the philosophers, but not for the other poster presenters. I thought that was a bit unfair. I think it’s clear that a separate prize for philosophers is warranted, but the other presenters should also be acknowledged. Furthermore, many of the posters were hung in the back of the tent almost next to the wall, where they were quite out of sight. Hanging the posters somewhere central seems very important to stimulate people to take a look.

• I think the prize was a good idea, though my sense is that the committee didn’t themselves get a chance to look at posters at their leisure. Longer poster sessions?

• The poster prize did a great job, I think. It improved the quality and atmosphere during the presentation very much! Please keep it, and give one to empirical posters as well (if possible)

Suggested improvements

• I think Patrick’s direction was great (half of them stand in front of the poster in an alternating time). We should do it from the next time.

• I think the posters suffered a little from being at the end of the day - my mind was so tired and full of information by the time of the poster session i didn’t have much attention/capacity left to take advantage of the posters.

• This worked very well! I’d encourage poster presenters to bring hard copies of their posters. Also select a few model posters to link to the ASSC website. This would be especially helpful for those making posters for the first time.

• Handouts, copies of the posters, makes it easier to read given the number of people and the spatial coordination of the posters (some continued quite down on the partitions),

• Don’t let the precious sessions run over time. Question time for Dretske went half an hour over time, which meant that 60 poster presenters got robbed of 30 mins of valuable time in order to allow a few irate questioners to grill Dretske a bit more.

Miscellaneous comments

• Choose for posters talks that have some chance of being presented in the poster format. Find something else to do with the rest of the not-so-good but good-enough submissions.
- It worked very well both for presenters (e.g. me) and audience.
- Was good to see young philosophers doing posters, but many still need command of the basics of the poster as a medium - too much text on many of them.
- The full schedule and details of the poster format should be available earlier.

Comments/suggestions:

i. The overall rating of the posters was good (3.0). However there were complaints about the quality and relevance of some posters.

   i. Quality: All poster presenters were emailed instructions for poster construction before the meeting, and these instructions were also available on the conference website. It should be noted that many philosophers had not presented posters previously and it is understandable that they may have relied too much on text. One suggestion would be to encourage future poster presenters to examine posters from this meeting now housed in the ASSC e-print server.²⁴

   ii. Relevance: This is a problem with no particularly easy solution. Some proposals are of good academic standard, but of apparently limited direct relevance to the study of consciousness. The program committee was asked to take perceived relevance into account. Proposals of low relevance, but good academic quality were not rejected outright. This was done for two reasons: (1) it can be difficult to judge the actual relevance of a piece of work to the study of consciousness based on abstract; and more importantly (2) rejecting these proposals would deny many attendees the possibility of obtaining funding to attend the meeting. Judging from comments and rankings of the poster proposals overall it is suggested that the committee increase the threshold for poster acceptance a little bit more, and accept a fixed number of posters (say 120 versus 136).²⁵ If the number of the submissions to the meeting continues to grow keeping accepting a fixed number of posters will in the short-term improve quality and relevance, and well as the prestige of the poster sessions, and will in the medium-to-long term keep a reasonable cap on the size of future meetings.

ii. There were many complaints about lack of space around the posters. Part of this was caused by the door-shaped format of the poster boards (1 m wide x 2 m long). This was exacerbated by the regrettable fact the uneven ground in the marquee stopped the posterboards being connected in a straight-line, but rather the boards were joined in a zigzag fashion to stop them falling over. This had the additional unfortunate effect meaning only every second board could be used effectively.²⁶ After complaints, St. Anne’s provided some additional spare boards from the college at no extra cost. However, it is strongly recommended that future conference organizers use the more traditional landscape standard (2 m wide x 1 m long). In the last two years (ASSC-9 and ASSC-10) poster sessions have been held outside to limited success. It is suggested that future sessions be held inside. Some of the complaints about lack of space probably relate more to the heat of walking around posters inside a marquee in the middle of summer. A poster session in an air-conditioned area would be better. Where ever they are held the location needs to be secure so they can remain hanging up over night.

iii. There were a number of suggestions to group the posters thematically (rather than alphabetically by first author as this year). This is perhaps worthwhile, but a hassle for

²⁴ See http://eprints.asse.caltech.edu/.
²⁵ Keeping in mind that approximately 25% of people will reject a poster proposal, so approximately the top 155 posters would eventually be considered for a poster slot.
²⁶ Even if the boards had been stood ‘straight’ presenters would have been extremely cramped.
organizers, and given the limited number of posters per session probably not worthwhile.

iv. The philosophy poster prize was a good addition to the program and should be continued in future years. In future, publishers should be encouraged ahead of time by the chair of the philosophy prize committee to donate books for awardees. It is recommended that the prize be specifically restricted to student members of the association.

v. Finally, it is important to note that the majority of presentations at the meeting are in poster format and this medium should be taken very seriously. The previous meetings have had problems with the physical setup at poster sessions. This needs to be avoided in future if we are to encourage people in the belief that the poster format is a format that is taken just as seriously as the concurrent talks at the meeting.

Social events

![Bar chart showing responses to social events]

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opening reception</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student night</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banquet</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch food</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The figure above summarizes the ratings of the three main social events organized at the conference: on the Friday evening the opening reception (3.2), the student reception (2.7) on the Saturday evening, on the banquet (2.3) held on the Sunday night, on Monday there was an unofficial closing reception at a nearby bar (Freuds).

**Opening reception**

The opening reception (3.2) was held immediately after the presidential address on the Friday evening at the University Natural History Museum.

**Venue**

- The location was nice, but to call the event [a] reception is pretty exaggerated
- The location was well chosen but the food was bad.
- Delightful venue!
- Great location but food sparse.
- The venue was fantastic, and champagne was a nice touch—very enjoyable.
- The place was wonderful But it was too short and no "special events" were organized. All the receptions were at the Freud cafe!

**Quality of food/alcohol**

- Nice place but very unsatisfactory food and drink service
- Soggy canapés!!
- Maybe more food but I really have no serious complaints with this year's effort.
- More time, and preferably more food.
Too little food!

Maybe more food as people were quite hungry and tired after the opening talks.

Longer, and more food.

Couldn’t catch any of the nibbles

More food.

I enjoyed the company but the food was disappointing.

More and better food

More space & more food!

More food.

The place was great! The drinks were good, the food was scant.

More food and drink please.

Vegetarians

It would be nice if somebody made sure there was at least one vegetarian item at each event. None of the dishes at the reception was unambiguously vegetarian. (Well, aside from the snack mix...)

Keep in mind the vegetarians!

Suggestions for next year

Go for glamour and glitz - that seems to be what Las Vegas is all about.

Somewhere with a good view.

Miscellaneous

Better directions to the venue might be useful

I’d be happy to DJ - I’m a pro!

Reception was held far too late (everything was delayed partly because the introductory welcome remarks were too long ) and many people who flew in from other countries were too hungry and tired by the time the reception started. Need to have some concern for keeping to schedule

Knowing who was who can be a difficulty, maybe having key figures from each field available for general introductions

No. It was very well done.

Comments/suggestions:

i. Attendees liked the spectacular venue, but complained about the relative lack of food and especially alcohol. The original booking for the space and catering was two hours[^27], however, the opening reception ran somewhat late, and this cut into the time of the reception. It is suggested that in future years that the venue picked stays open later, perhaps up to three hours, possibly with a cash bar starting at a certain time to cap costs, and with sufficient amounts of food to tide people over before dinner. It should be noted that people sometimes have somewhat unrealistic expectations about how far their conference fees will stretch in terms of food, alcohol, venue etc.

[^27]: Spectacular venues cost a lot of money to hire.
[^28]: Sparkling wine was mainly served at this reception; many people commented that they would have preferred to have beer. Perhaps an ideal venue would be one with a restaurant/bar with food that people could move into once the free drinks/snacks were used up.

27
28
Student night

The student night (2.7) was held at University College on the Saturday night. As at ASSC-9 two senior academics (one neuroscientist (Christof Koch), one philosopher (Tim Bayne) discussed issues. Some food (fruit and crisps) as well as wine was available. The event lasted about two hours. The Mind-Science Foundation kindly donated $900 towards catering at the event.

Structure of the event

- Last year’s event was more the way it should be, relaxed atmosphere, discussions you could take part in, but you could as well just leave it. This year’s venue was a bit too formal, the discussion was too prominent. It wasn’t quite clear beforehand, if food and drink would be provided or not. For future meetings: Make it some kind of BBQ style party :)

- I was expecting the event to be a) social and b) for students. In fact it was everyone from the conference packed into a hall and then a debate where half the audience could not hear what was being said, but could not talk either. I was expecting something smaller for students only that would get more people involved or just talking in small groups.

- I liked the idea of having a discussion, but I think such a discussion would fit very well in the conference at large as well, instead of just at the student social event. It would have been nice if the social aspect of the event would have gotten more attention (p2p talking, drinking, maybe even dancing?).

- The debate was very interesting, but I felt that students didn’t have enough time to interact with each other at this event.

- The debate format was interesting, but (in part due to poor acoustics) didn’t add much to the event. I’d suggest less of that, to encourage more mixing.

- More planning of the actual contents of the main event - i.e., if it is to be a debate, maybe we should be sure there is some disagreement.

- I think it was a very nice discussion, but somehow it think it would be nicer to have a 1 hour discussion, and after that some informal discussion during dinner.

- The setting was relatively inappropriate, as the room was not that attractive, and the speakers could barely be heard from some parts of it.

- The idea of the questions for Bayne & Koch was very nice, but it took a little bit too long, which made the student group fall apart with many people leaving on their own. Maybe it would be better to keep it really short (and not starting too late) and getting to a large enough bar quite quickly. :D I had more contacts with fellow students on the conference itself and on the last night, than on the students’ meeting.

- More fun, better food, and most important: room for establishing a interdisciplinary connections and a political platform

- Find a better space where everyone can hear what is going on.

- Student social was a good idea, but following directly after a full day of talks with no break for dinner made it less than ideal. My suggestion for next year would be to either have it later in the evening, allowing time for dinner before, or somehow incorporate a real dinner into the event. Either way would be preferable to the situation at this year’s social.

- The room was a bit crowded, and the speakers were quite hard to hear.

- Make it smaller, which is exclusively for students.

- Make it a real student event! Better food would be nice. to be held in a room where its easier to move around and meet people, the benches were a bit restricting and crowded. maybe have a debate between students rather than between Koch and Byrne!

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29 However at ASSC-9 the academics talked for less than 15 minutes.
30 No conference funds were used for this event.
31 Comments regarding the student event were only collected from ASSC students.
- A little better food, more time just for social interaction (the dialogue was interesting, but not needed in a student social setting)

Food and drinks
- Real food. I think we had pizza at Caltech but only chips at Oxford.
- more drinks, standing rather sitting promotes mingling
- The debate was interesting and fun. I guess the food on offer could have been a bit better, but that's a fairly minor point.

Comments/suggestions:

i. With an overall score of 2.7 the event was generally poorly received by students. The reasons behind this were probably best summarized by one of the statements above “I was expecting the event to be a) social and b) for students. In fact it was everyone from the conference packed into a hall and then a debate where half the audience could not hear what was being said, but could not talk either. I was expecting something smaller for students only that would get more people involved or just talking in small groups.” It is recommended that future student socials’s keep closely to the much more successful model used at Caltech: make it more a student party, put a lot of beer on ice (good beer is cheaper than nasty wine, less alcoholic, and more refreshing in mid-summer), make the food more like a full meal to stop people getting too drunk (pizza or BBQ would be quite sufficient), if you have senior people talking keep it to a minimum (15-30 minutes max) and keep what they say relevant to the future careers of students.\textsuperscript{32} It would also be better to set the event later in the evening to allow attendees to eat beforehand if they so desire; though ideally the event will be organized in a bar where people can buy drinks and food (preferably the party would either take over the entire bar, or be located in a private room). I would suggest that there is nothing wrong with some gate-crashing by non-students, but people should see this as gate-crashing, and keep it a student party. The original idea of the event was to allow students a chance to meet each other early in the conference; unfortunately the event this year was not a student social, but a poorly structured (even if interesting) public debate between a neuroscientist and philosopher.

ii. There was some confusion in organizing the student event this year. The local organizer had gone to the trouble of reserving the student common room at St. Anne’s, with a cash bar, for the use of students. This was called off at the last minute by the student organizers. Unfortunately this late change resulted in the event not being able to be listed in the conference manual. To avoid confusion in the future the ASSC student committee should be left in full charge of the student party, with clear instructions regarding the final deadline for the conference booklet.

Banquet

The banquet was held in the dining hall of St. Anne’s College at the cost of £35 (subsidized down from £44). The total number of attendees was 156.

Quality of food/wine
- It would be difficult to find poorer quality food. It would be better to serve that deserves 35 pounds!

\textsuperscript{32} Avoid senior people talking about life, the world etc, but rather keep them focussed on information that is directly relevant to students – scientific content will be handled elsewhere in the program.
The bottom line (for me): a good space for talking (no background noise) and abundant food and drink.

I've heard the food was poor even though it was very expensive.

Fish as the only main course was an odd choice - many people love fish but many - like myself - generally avoid it. I ate it since there was no other option but I can not say I did so with much pleasure. Perhaps dislike of fish is less common than I suppose. (?)

Have a vegetarian option. Food should be a lot cheaper and probably better in USA anyway so should be able to provide a better banquet at a lower cost.

Spanish wine ;-) Two different wines would be good for the conference dinner.

Quality of food was modest, atmosphere in this cafeteria was like in a cafeteria, so it is certainly better to have dinner with some nice colleagues on my own. (Although I was lucky enough to have some nice colleagues at my side at the banquet).

Good food and wine quality.

Just my bad luck that I didn't like soup or fish. The standard of the food however seemed good. A choice of two options for each course would maybe address this problem.

Costs

This was partly a function of exchange rates, but it was priced out of the means of students this year. That shouldn’t be the case.

At the risk of contradicting my previous comment on the quality of food at the lunches: I did not attend the dinner this year because of the price. My understanding from those who were there is that the food at the dinner did not justify the cost. It must be possible to make the price less prohibitive without resorting to holding the event at Burger King.

Banquets are always a rip-off for some reason. I was there for the company, not the food. The fish was good but the wine was crap (no, I don’t think you should go for poorer quality; it was poor enough as it is).

I didn’t attend the banquet but heard many people comment that it was overpriced and not particularly good.

Less expensive.

The problem is that for £35, sometimes for two, one could have had a sumptuous meal in an excellent restaurant in town. Colleges do not give good value for money, hard bargaining with a good restaurant or two might give better results.

For 35£, the diner was bad and the wine awful and restricted.

Not sure. Somehow with the banquets I’m always disappointed--seems like so-so food for too much money. This year, I thought the fish (main dish) was downright bad.

In general, the price for the food at the banquet this year was ridiculous, but it has been the same problem at Tucson meetings. It seems to be unavoidable.

Although the food was fine, it was a terrible value for the money. 35 quid anywhere in town would have been better food.

The problem was not the cost from my point of view, but rather the food was not worth it, nor the venue.

In my opinion, the quality of the food for 35 pounds was overpriced. I think it would be a good idea if the organizers would make sure that the food is worth its price.

Students

It would be nice to mix students and big fishes rather than to put the stars all together.

Definitely bring the price down so that students do not feel priced-out of it. Perhaps by having a cash-bar...
for attendees to purchase their own wine, if that helps the quality stay high, but bring the cost down. In any case, Las Vegas should be more affordable than the UK, and the location of the meeting will affect the cost of everything.

- It would be nice to find a way for students to attend but that may be financially impossible.
- £35 is by no means a student price. Actually, it equals to 3 hostel nights... The main reason to attend a banquet is the people, not the gastronomy. Please make it more affordable - or just a picnic ;)

Buffet

- Buffet is better, and more options (more food in general, too) would be good.
- There are lots of great quality buffet in Las Vegas, though some of them may be too noisy to have any conversation...
- The dinner was not satisfactory at all. It wasn’t worth the price... I think, organizing the dinner for large amount of people necessarily degrades the quality of the food. The best option seems like the very good quality buffet style (much better than the ones at lunch).
- Try something that does not follow the standard banquet format, with the three course meal &c.

Suggestions for improvements

- More speeches :-(
- Have people sit at round tables. It favors better socializing
- Where possible, I think round tables (seating 8 or so) are much better for socializing than this year’s long tables.
- May be it would be a better alternative to really achieve the announced goal (get in contact to other scientists) to take away the tables after dinner and to have the opportunity to change your conversation partners, respectively (and to choose a room where the acoustics are better).
- Standing is best for mingling
- It'd be nicer if one could stay in the venue a bit longer. And maybe there should be some sort of entertainment. (In Bremen, there was a magician, who was quite nice.)
- We registered late and therefore were excluded from the banquet .. we weren’t impressed with that !!!!!
- Dancing (on location) afterwards? or a bar option afterwards?

Comments/suggestions:

1. The overall quality of the food and wine at this year’s banquet was strongly disliked (2.3). Unfortunately, in Oxford there were no other options: other colleges were unavailable, and no restaurant in Oxford would have been able to handle the more than 150 attendees. Short of cancelling the event altogether (or drastically reducing the number of attendees and holding it elsewhere) there does not seem to have been much more the local organizers could have done to make the quality of the food/wine better, since was in the hands of the college. It was unfortunate that there was little in the way of food extras (bread rolls, salad etc). It would also have been better too if there had been two choices of wine. However it should be noted that all these improvements would have raised the already high price of the meal. It was also disappointing that the event ended so early: it would have been nicer to have a slower meal with more speeches and perhaps other events. The possibility of having dancing or some other event later in the evening would be good. Generally a good banquet should be seen as a night long party with food and drink at the start, and some secondary venue for more drinking and perhaps dancing later. The secondary venue should be pre-advertised (and no
more than 5-15 minutes walking distance) to allow those who don’t want to attend the banquet to attend the latter half of the evening.

ii. There were some complaints that overall people did not mix at the dinner, with “important” people sitting at some tables. One alternative would be to assign random table numbers to conference banquet tickets to mix up attendees. However, this seems to smack somewhat of Orwellian social engineering, and given the cost/quality ratio of banquets might further enrage the attendees.

iii. The quality of the food at banquets is an ongoing problem at meetings. Perhaps a buffet as at Caltech is a better approach. Fixed menus have the problem of providing limited variety.

iv. There have been suggestions that students get a discount for the conference banquet. This does not seem feasible given the high cost (keep in mind the discount would have to be passed on to other attendees). A partial solution would be to make the banquet one half of the evening, with the second half of the evening at a bar with food and perhaps dancing that non-banquet attendees could go to from the start for dinner, and where they could meet up later with banquet attendees. This should all be organized ahead of time, and advertised in the conference booklet.

Closing drinks & conference bar.

All good conference’s have a particular bar that becomes the unofficial meeting place for conference attendees after hours. It is helpful if the local organizers pre-select and advertise such a venue. The bar should be in easy walking distance to the conference site, and provide both food and alcohol, and should be sufficiently quiet to allow conversations to occur easily. At Oxford, Freud’s, a local Oxford club/bar/restaurant became the unofficial watering hole of the meeting.

Unfortunately, on the closing night Freud’s was unable to cope with the sudden influx of people, and food/drink orders took a very long time to fill (i.e., 30-60 minutes). It is strongly recommended that future organizers double-check/pre-warn venues to make sure that they are able to cope with an influx of 100+ attendees.

Lunches provided at St. Anne’s

At ASSC-10 lunches were provided in the marquee of the conference site to all attendees as part of the basic conference package. The total cost of lunches was £11 per day; this cost was folded into the general cost of registration.

The provision of lunches

- Don’t get me wrong - it was great that lunch was provided; it’s just a shame that the food itself was so bad and unhealthy.
- I feel strongly that providing lunch is important, because there’s just no time with the normal schedule to go off somewhere and get lunch (unless some feasible choices are VERY nearby). Also, [the] same goes for breakfast, especially if handy breakfast places are not very nearby.
- It is definitely good to include lunch in the package, and buffet style is good as well. The quality of food should be improved.
- I liked the fact that lunch was included - it saved time and created more opportunities to meet people.
- It’s very good to have that time for social/professional interaction.

Quality

- Tasteless...

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33 Plus £3.70/day for coffee/tea.
- Lack of vegetables!
- St Anne's: Terrible terrible food. I am pretty sure some of the choices were based on spam. Very little fibre too. They should have at least offered some apples or something. I had to get mine at the supermarket downtown.
- More healthy food
- Very good
- Small buffet lunches with sandwiches, as provided at St. Ann's are good as most people then eat a large meal in the evening
- Same every day
- The lunches were terribly bad and always the same...
- Quality was not very good, which had a negative effect on the feeling about conference expenses (and worried anticipation about the banquet!).
- How about more variety, hot food, vegetables, fruit?
- Please provide warm meals.
- British food... will be better in LV
- Fine. Not terribly exciting but just fine.
- The provided lunches were excellent.
- Insufficient quantity
- Better assortment would help
- This might be an English thing (famous for their lack of cuisine) but I thought the lunches were more finger-food. It would be nice if there were 1 hot dish. Or at least a variety of sandwiches, fruit, and salads.
- The lunches were weird - there seemed to be a lot of stuff on offer but it tasted strangely homogenous! It was pretty stodgy so probably didn't help sleepiness levels in the afternoon.
- Readily provided me with special food because of allergies.
- Better quality, hot food
- More salads
- A bit more variety, a bit less grease.
- OK. I'm happy with simple food.
- Food was not very good overall
- They were truly dreadful and made me ill. I needed to visit a GP, and am still on antibiotics!
- Improve food and cooking quality
- The format was fine, but the food was somewhat bland.
- Could have been a bit more varied. Other than that, it was good finger food.
- Better food - sandwiches were ok but quiches etc were not good (not fresh?)
- It was good enough.
- I thought the lunches at St Anne's were terrible. I went out for lunch elsewhere. I'd suggest using proper bread (baguettes or so) instead of these gas-station type pick-up sandwiches.
- Too much carbohydrate, too much fried. Sushi might be good.
- Not every day "more of the same"..., even though for it was good!
Vegetarian options

- Excellent food, good choice for vegetarians!
- Vegetarian options would be nice.
- Thanks for the vegetarian food! Could there be a vegan option also?
- More salads/vegetables would be great.
- Maybe a bit more veggie and vegan food given the number of veggies at the meeting (though the proportions weren’t bad, compared to many other meetings).
- More vegetables (like stuff which could be dipped) would definitely be appropriate (esp. as it is in the summer and hence often hot outside).
- Great: Clearly marked vegetarian dishes. Perhaps a bit more day-to-day variety.

Comments/suggestions:

i. Overall the quality of the lunches by St. Anne’s was disliked (2.5). However, this should not blind future organizers to the virtues of providing lunches. It not only guarantees that many attendees are fed quickly during lunchtime, ensuring that they are more likely to attend the start of concurrent sessions immediately after lunch, but more importantly the lunches provide a known meeting place for attendees. While the food may have been bad, many attendees enjoyed good conversations outside during the lunch break. If left to their own devices people would have generally scattered and much of the social interactions lost. The overall quality of food could have been much improved by providing a buffet. This would also have allowed for many more vegetarian options that were sadly lacking.

Administration

Administration of meeting

This year an outside company, ‘Oxford University Continuing Professional Development’ (CPD), was hired for £6000 to manage a number of duties for the conference (management of databases of attendees, online abstract submission, online registration, abstract book production34, onsite conference registration). In addition, hire of conference venues (including St. Anne’s College) was done in CPD’s name, which allowed the meeting to remain VAT exempt.

Apart from the online registration and abstract submission, the conference website was managed by the local organizers.

Registration at meeting

Registration opened approximately three months prior to the meeting. The date for early registration ended approximately one month prior to the meeting; this coincided with the final date membership applications would be considered by the membership committee prior to the meeting. All registrations and booking were handled by CPD.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early (before May 15th)</th>
<th>Late (after May 15th)</th>
</tr>
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34 Approximately half the work of constructing the abstract booklet was done by one of the local organizers (PW), and future organizers should note that not all work may be able to be done adequately by those hired.
### ASSC Member
- £155
- £255

### ASSC Student member
- £65
- £165

### Non-Member
- £235
- £335

#### Payment options

- People should be able to pay directly online via credit card.
- No PayPal registration procedure anymore!!!!!! Have people pay to an ASSC account. In Antwerp we could send money to a University account.
- I would suggest more payment options.
- Don't use PayPal anymore.
- PayPal was a bit of problem for many of us this time, but not sure there is a good alternative.
- Accept credit card without PayPal.
- PayPal is a pain to use.
- Using PayPal for registration was a big headache. E-mail communication with the conference staff at Oxford was also difficult. I expect to see a change next year.
- Make it free for undergraduates. (Especially since they are likely to be very few, if any)
- Direct credit card registration instead of PayPal (problem with limits)
- PayPal is just OK.
- PayPal didn't work for me, very annoying.
- Payment methods should be more flexible.
- This worked OK though I would have preferred not to have used PayPal.
- Ditch PayPal. I have on good authority that 10% of the registrants had trouble with that. I had to wire money from my USA bank to an Oxford bank. It took several e-mail exchanges to even get that far.
- YES ... please accept electronic payments ... this year we had to actually withdraw £680 from a cash machine ... which was ridiculous !!
- This PayPal system was awful: I couldn't pay with it, I had to wait for some magic number to come to me, with the explicit mention I couldn't go ask for it myself at my bank card company. The number never came to me, PayPal urged me to find that number, without it being clear where I should find it. So I opted out for the nights at the college and found hotels myself - this lowered the total price I had to pay with PayPal, and this lower amount I was allowed to pay.
- Trying to register was a nightmare for me and everyone I spoke to also had bad experiences trying to register and pay.

#### General comments about administration

- Improve technical and administrative support.
- Very well done this year.
- Maps and computer information in advance. But the organization was in general truly outstanding.
- I like it the way it is...
- Was perfect
- Geraint Rees obviously took every effort to run the affairs in the best manner possible. But apparently he did not have enough administrative support. I encountered several administrative problems.
- Should have more info sent to people. Especially at St Anne's - it was hard to know what to do e.g. picking
up name badge and book. There was not a lot of instructions. Geraint Rees was not very friendly

- No. Registration and administrative support throughout this year’s conference was excellent.
- Went smoothly, no complaints.
- The "forced automation" elements of the registration system were a hassle again this year. I wound up having to make multiple payments and get help by email, since the mandatory web form couldn’t handle extending a reservation for extra nights after the fact.

Maps

- Directions to conference venues and signs at the venues might be improved

- Yes. It often seems like crucial practical details are somehow overlooked in the conference materials. For example, this year there was no map in the booklet showing where the main meetings (i.e., the Martin Wood library and Museum) were! Also, there was NOTHING in the conference booklet saying anything about lunch (either where it was provided OR that it was provided at all) or breakfast (same thing. It wasn’t until Saturday afternoon I realized that breakfast was provided.

- No. Although it would have been nice to include some more touristic information about the city of the conference in the conference map.

Badges

- Name tags: MUCH bigger font for the names, small font for the conference’s name (we know where we are, but would like to know who we are talking to without seeming, in half of all cases, to be staring at socially inappropriate parts of their anatomy).

- Names on badges should be larger.

Costs

- I’d pay a bit more to get a tote bag.

- Yes, registration fees are very expensive.

- No complaints on that score at all, though Oxford was some expensive!! It is a long time since the cost of a room in residence was more than the cost of a nearby hotel.

Miscellaneous

- You announced the option of an extra night a bit too late. At that point I have already sought travel funding based on checkout on the 26th and could do little to change it. I would have stayed otherwise. It would be best if you could announce all pre and post conference events before accommodations/registration opens.

- Submission by second author should be possible. Contact address should be available by the second author.

Comments/suggestions:

i. Hiring CPD to manage basic administrative needs of the meeting saved a great deal of time and effort by the local organisers and is strongly recommended for future meetings.

ii. A number of people have suggested dropping Paypal as a payment option at the meeting. It is clear that a subset of people attending the meeting do not like it as a payment method. However, it is unclear how many people have this problem. It is important to keep in mind that all members (approx. 550) pay their membership using Paypal (and generally no more than 5% of those have problems, and those that do usually solve them quite easily by calling a toll free US number). Paypal is used by other conference organizations quite successfully (e.g., VSS with >1000 attendees), and of course is used a standard form of payment by millions of people using Ebay. Full credit card payments are possible, but generally very difficult and expensive outside of corporate fully-contracted systems. In addition to Paypal, members were able
to pay by direct bank transfer (it is also possible to transfer funds from bank accounts using Paypal), UK check\textsuperscript{35}, and to pay in cash at the registration desk. An alternative to Paypal would certainly be welcomed, but it is unclear what a good alternative is; unfortunately, none of those complaining are actually suggesting viable alternative payment methods. It might be worth approaching the ASSC membership before next year’s meeting for suggestions about alternative payment methods.

iii. What were problematic this year were delays caused by people selecting a payment option and then having to wait for CPD to send a second email with a personalized link to Paypal for payment. It would be better if people were to fill out an interactive online form listing options (banquet, tutorials, registration category), and then given a second screen an itemized receipt for confirmation, and that could be filled out on the spot.

iv. One thing that does cause problems is that many people (>15%) incorrectly list themselves under a different membership category (e.g., student). This necessitates that all registrations be checked manually to ensure that they have been filled out correctly.

v. A couple of people complained about lack of extras (e.g., conference tote bag). It is suggested that these comments be ignored as these people generally do not want to pay the additional costs of registration by adding items.

vi. A number of people complained about the font size on badges, future organizers please take note!

**Technical problems**

Audiovisual problems were largely non-existent throughout the program. This was in large part due to excellent audiovisual services being provided within the Martin Woods Complex.

Two audiovisual problems occurred: (1) on the opening night there were delays caused in the getting a proper signal out of the Mac laptop being used for the opening address – this resulted in a delay in the opening by 15-20 minutes; (2) during one of the concurrent sessions at St. Anne’s there was a problem with the AV which resulted in the entire concurrent stream needing to be moved from one location to another.

**Format of the conference**

- **Find one building where all the concurrent sessions can take place. Mix philosophers and scientists in concurrent sessions. You don’t want scientists going to science talks and philosophers going to philosophy talks. That’s the point of the association and its meetings: to mix people.**

- **This time of the year, you could hold it midweek and not on the weekend. I don’t think this clashes with anyone’s teaching.**

- **It was strenuous, but great**

- **The current style is quite good**

- **I don’t no if this point is really important for the next meeting in Las Vegas, but I would have liked to know more about Oxford and his history; something likes a presentation of the cultural background of the city where the conference is taking place.**

- **More time for discussion and moderators who really moderate**

- **I found it pretty tiring and intense, but I guess that’s true of most conferences. Time was an issue as I mentioned so perhaps making the conference a day longer would spread things out a bit**

- **Overall length was good, days were a bit long at times.**

\textsuperscript{35} The hassle factor and insecurity of foreign checks precludes it as a viable payment option.
Less vision-based

Overall I thought the format of the conference was excellent.

I would have liked the same content spread over an extra day, to avoid information overload and to allow more time for socializing and discussion. It would have been wonderful to have seen a one-hour debate between Ned Block and Dan Dennett on the ontological status of p-consciousness.

Keep format, maybe finish slightly earlier.

The opening session was over 3 hours long. A toilet break would have worked well.

Perhaps at least one concurrent philosophy stream with longer talks and chances for longer questions? 20/10 is just too short for what we do.

Shorter parallel-session talks; 20 minutes will yield tighter talks and more in the same time.

Conference could be a day longer. Small 5-minute breaks between concurrent sessions. Small breaks between Welcome/William James Prize speech/Presidential Address

More discussion -- absolutely essential. Also hard to introduce.

I am really satisfied with this format, thanks!

To add more time to see the city, maybe to make a guided tour

More accent on accurate timing (less overrunning of lectures)

The meeting should not finish so late the last day. And it would be nice if there was more time for discussion

it has been great like this, should stay like it is

Format's good.

No - seems fine as it is.

I like it the way it is...

Ok as is

Perfect as-is. I wouldn't change a thing.

More breaks in between talks

The overall length was just about right. Perhaps convening the conference on a Tuesday or Wednesday, and wrapping it up on a Friday or Saturday, would be better than straddling a weekend.

It is good as it is.

Probably somewhat less "packed" to let more time for discussions - as most of the time at Conferences, there is too little time left for discussions. An impression of being rushed through the presentations has prevailed once again at the Symposia.

Perhaps more scheduled time for questions after keynote talks

The organization was splendid. I would only recommend scheduling discussion sessions.

I'd like it to be during the week and not the weekend. Timing of the sessions is very good as it is.

Weekdays rather than weekend please (makes childcare much easier)

The last day is overloaded; it was difficult for me to leave on the last day given how late the festivities ran.

I'd like something a bit more fun like at Tucson - poetry slam, end of consciousness party, stage show ???/something to let off steam and make jokes about consciousness.

Too many parallel sessions. Better increase the poster time and improve the place with guides (postdoc and young at spirit seniors) who will make the attendees to go to different posters. I will explain better later in an email.
There were too many sessions on the last day.

Good structure

It would be better to reduce the length of the meeting. There should be a proper dinner break and then an evening session rather than things just spilling over into the evening.

The overall schedule was not optimal to say the least. First a quite unnecessary coffee pause after 1 hour in the morning. Then a quite exhausting afternoon session with three hours of lectures without a pause. One hour and a half is I think the most you can listen to with full attention. This must be changed.

Maybe one day more, less packed

More room for discussion, real interdisciplinary exchange

Stop not as late Monday

The sessions were far too long. Sometimes they lasted for over 3 hours in a row. We need more breaks and that the speakers do not prolong their talks far beyond their time schedule.

45 minute speaks may be enough. Longer lunch-breaks to enable off-site lunch possibility and discussion. Discrete notification of the speakers with "5 MINUTES LEFT", "1 MINUTE LEFT" etc. notes, to keep the conference on schedule.

Was good in oxford

During the week is better than over the weekend!

Good to do it during the weekend.

It was well balanced, although the final day was a bit of a slog!

Perhaps one week is a better option. And I guess it may be better to have debate sessions between opposing perspectives, which go on more than once. This may provide a chance for further exchange and resolving misunderstandings, which is important to such a young field of study.

No. It was a truly excellent conference.

Could easily go another day and have a break for one morning.

Being held in July would be preferable.

not sure that weekends are particularly sociable in terms of family commitment

How about a demo night? How about an interdisciplinary collaboration prize?

I thought that the program was extremely heavy, completely exhausting and also I thought that the lodging at the college was extremely expensive. Moreover, it was absolutely unfeasible to take only three nights to attend four or five days of conference

It would be better if the calendar date of conference wouldn’t be identical from year to year. It is inconvenient for those who have some other regular event on exactly the same days of June.

Start later in day. 10 am perhaps

No, just right.

Length of conference was ok like this

Comments/suggestions:

i. Overall the structure of the program appears good. I would suggest the following minor changes to the program:
   a. Change the welcoming address from 30 minutes to 1 hour. Leave approximately half of the welcoming address open for questions from the membership.
   b. Move the William James Prize speaker (as a full keynote) later into the program (perhaps Sunday or Monday).
c. Bring the length of the Tom-Slick award into line with the other programs and make it two hours long, freeing up time for one keynote address.

d. The program needs to end no earlier (say 5.30pm), and should end with a strong keynote address (not symposium). This probably means that one keynote address should be cut from the program. It is strongly recommended that before starting discussion on keynotes etc, a full conference schedule is constructed.

**Questionnaire**

**General thoughts on questionnaire**

- It’s ok :-(
- It is pretty good.
- Not really.
- I like it the way it is...
- Don’t require answers to questions.
- No quite alright
- Good questionnaire
- Let responders skip questions and mark no comment.
- Do NOT make it mandatory to respond to every question even if one has nothing to say. Otherwise, the questionnaire seems fine.

**Provide hard copy of questionnaire at meeting**

- Have it available at the meeting so that people can fill it as they go
- Announce that there is one at the beginning of the conference. Append evaluation sheets inside conference booklet so that speakers and events are rated promptly and accurately and then quickly transferred online.

**Additional questions**

- Have also rating opportunity for concurrent speakers. Distinguish between rating for quality of presentation and rating of relevance of content
- A lot of questions are too general - I can see that it makes it shorter, but I’d rather get the possibility to answer in more detail
- Add ‘Workshop Presenter’ to the list of identifiers on involvement. Ask about known choices of venues, and suggestions for future ones.
- Add questions on accommodation.
- Less attention to the “big” event (plenary talks and symposia) and more to the concurrent lectures and the posters. For example, ask “Which were the top five concurrent lectures, according to your judgment?” etc.
- Perhaps add a field for suggestions about ASSC overall -- potential initiatives and innovations for the organization.

**Comments/suggestions:**

i. Generally the questionnaire worked well. Future questionnaires should be kept as close as possible to this one to allow comparison of quality of events across meetings. There were some complaints about the mandatory nature of rating
questions (comment boxes were never mandatory). Making ratings mandatory is necessary to ensure comprehensive statistics are collected.

ii. Providing a hard copy of the questionnaire to be filled in later online is perhaps a good idea. This could be printed in the back of the conference booklet.

iii. Providing more in depth questions on specific concurrent talks was tried at ASSC-8 and did not work well (too much choice). Also it falls against the spirit of the questionnaire, which is to judge how well the meeting was organized. Hence, questions at the level of decisions made by the organizing committees (e.g., how good were was a particular symposium? Not how good were the individual speakers in a symposium, since the selection was at the symposia, not speaker level).

Final thoughts

Conference booklet

- It would help to have the email addresses in the book.
- The abstract book could have an alphabetical index of authors and/or topics (and the abstracts eventually be numerically ordered). Abstracts for symposia should be in a separate section of the abstract book. Additions of ads in the abstract book from Publishers could be of financial interest. One could think about changing the format one of the conference’s days and with an afternoon free for visits, and then with talks in the morning and the evening. When people pre-register on-line, they could already check whether they would need a receipt that could be ready by check-in at the meeting.
- Two suggestions for the BOOKLET: 1. Contact info/email address in the conference program for poster & talk presenters. 2. Organize the book in order of presentation (date, time) rather than alphabetically. Can just number everything consecutively to do this.
- Alphabetical ordering of the abstracts was cumbersome. Putting abstracts from consecutive talks in the same order in the abstract book would be more convenient. Same hold for posters.
- The loss of special characters in abstracts seems to be a yearly problem, and a needless waste of person-hours. Accepting submissions in Word and/or rtf format would solve this problem for 90%+ of members. (I know there’s an anti-Microsoft-imperialism issue here, but still ...)
- Have the abstracts on the ASSC website at least a week or two before the start of the conference, so that one can plan, based on the abstracts, the choice of the sessions or posters one wants to go to. Considering the amount of abstracts, this is harder to achieve at the conference if one assists full-time and wants to socialize during the breaks and in the evenings.
- A name+institution+email listing of all attendees would be nice to have in the conference booklet.

Venue

- My room was dirty, poor, noisy. I didn’t have light, and still paid 75 GBP/night for it. I’ve already complained about this and know that the scientific organizers do not have the ultimate control over the lodging but still I am very disappointed by this experience, even thought I could still enjoy the ASSC as such. Thank you for organizing it!
- The rooms at St. Anne’s were far too expensive for what they provided – on the other hand, it was wonderful that we were able to stay in such a pleasant place and so close to where it all happened – for this, congratulations!
- Accommodation was too expensive and pretty low quality.
- Role of philosophy Where possible avoid lodging participants in dorms
- The lecture theatre was too small, the audio quality was bad, air conditioning didn’t function very well.
Philosophy at the meeting

- I really question the usefulness of some of the philosophy talks to anyone who is not a philosopher. It's the ASSC, not the APSC. Philosophers who have not done their science homework, or who are not aware of the nature and purpose of the association, should simply not be speakers. And I think the welcoming address pointing out that philosophers were welcome, and that a third of the office holders etc. were philosophers, just goes to show that they are over-influential and overrepresented.

- The conference was excellent and I felt very enriched and enlightened by it - by the presentations and by the opportunities for discussion with other attendees. I am a scientist who is very interested in philosophy and I worry that having the philosophy all together in separate sessions marginalizes it a bit - might be better to mix the philosophy and science more.

- I guess I thought there could be something showing how philosophical work can be used as beneficial tool in the analysis of actual data collected by psychologist.

- The main difficulty of the conference, it seemed to me, was philosophers and cognitive scientists failing to connect. As far as I could tell, the philosophy talks were dumbed down for a general audience (and hence of little interest to philosophers) and the cog sci talks were often too technical for philosophers to understand. This seems to me a deep problem, one I think a meeting of this sort ought to take more seriously.

- Try NOT to invite philosophers who don't care much about empirical findings or scientists who happen to study awareness or roughly NCCs but have little to say about consciousness.

General content issues

- ASSC conferences seem very much oriented towards perception in recent years; might be an idea to actively focus on encouraging symposia from other areas such as memory and language.

- Fab conference. Nice and friendly. Really intense and thought provoking talks. It would be good to see more people talking about consciousness of things other than visual percepts.

- My previous comment generalized: try to look forward to find new ideas presented by new people, instead of giving so much room to the established "Stars" in the business (we already know what they are going to say, don't we?)

- Big names are a two-edged sword. They do draw but they seldom have anything new to say and often do little preparation. At the second last Tucson conference, Pinker drew an audience of at least 2000 and huge media attention, yet gave a talk he has given dozens of times already. Dennett's talk this year was equally unoriginal and also seriously lacking in argument or evidence.

- Huge strides are being made in neuroscience of consciousness. Let's not forget to relate it to clinical problems.

- More room for clinical contributions.

- I was disappointed because the fundamental questions were barely aired. Learning about brain wiring is interesting but has nothing much to do with consciousness as far as I can see. This is not because consciousness is not a biophysical problem but because it is a different biophysical problem. Having flown straight from a meeting with Noam Chomsky I found the meeting mind-numbingly blinkered. And I emphasize I am not a mysterian or phase space flapdoodlist, I am a hard nosed biophysicist but one that knows that almost all of what we heard is self-contradictory in just the way William James said it was.

- More plenary talks on NCCs of states of consciousness, loss of conscious abilities, consciousness and emotion, animal consciousness, etc. Visual Perception is important -- in fact, my PhD dissertation was in that -- but not as central to the wide range of consciousness studies. Searle is right in that!

Miscellaneous comments

- My general impression of ASSC is that this is an old boys' club (with "boys" not necessarily being old). I could not get into communication the way I wanted to.

- I think that you should introduce student rates for the workshops. This may increase attendance. Also consider student rates for the banquet. I am willing to pay a few more bucks for registration in order to
subsidize students. 2) Encourage more dialogue between philosophers and scientists.

- it would be very helpful to presenters if ASSC posted a sample of an efficient power point presentation... many presenters put too much data on one page, don't use good graphics/clear examples, and the presentations are far too long to fit the time... which makes people rush thru the most important part - their conclusions.

- Why Las Vegas? It's such a boring place. I'd prefer to see the American meetings held in Canada. It's nicer and easier than obtaining a US visa.

- As the next conference will be in Las Vegas, it would be fun to have a Texas Holdem tournament (and perhaps a tutorial) for those interested in Las Vegas. In addition to fun and excitement, it would be a good opportunity to investigate how such dimensions of consciousness as concentration, access consciousness, attention, rationality, theory of mind, emotion regulation etc. :) It would be helpful if changes in the program/talks/posters would be somehow announced, for instance via email or with a short information added to the conference booklet or available at the registration desk.

- Coffee breaks need to be organized better (more coffee stations available, less queuing). This was the same problem already at ASSC9. Otherwise it was simply great!

- Student prize lecture should be later in conference, and last lecture was a MOST unfortunate choice - not because she became ill but because it was just not good or relevant.

- This conference confirmed my previous experience that St Anne's Oxford is a poor venue. With a relatively small conference it should be possible to hold all the sessions in one place, especially the concurrents, where one wants to be able to move between sessions.

- Slightly bigger text for name badges - as a novice to the field, I didn't know who most people were at the start and it was hard to read unless already talking to people

- I wonder if the issue of "standards" and Patrick's adopting the stern father role were linked. I think both need to be reconsidered. Rigor can come in many different forms----not only reductive ones.

- having some sort of online message board or connection to the ASSC members throughout the year to keep research ideas flowing, and allow discussion of research ideas etc. in an informal setting

- Well... I understand that funding is an important issue, and this comment may sound irrelevant to some. But Las Vegas does not seem like a good option to me at all. I highly appreciate alternative options rather than academic areas, but Las Vegas, as well as Disneyland, may not be my favorite alternative after all. I suppose some people choose life styles incompatible with spending money and time in such places; for political, ethical, economical, or other reasons.

- Total expense was too much. Choice of the place should be considered. Cheaper place for accommodation would be preferable. Meeting fee was also too expensive. Meeting fee should be minimized.

- Whenever the subject allows it I would select the participants for Symposia and concurrent sessions in such a way that there is a mixture of Neuroscientists, Philosophers, computer scientist, etc. I feel that the strength of this meeting lies in its ability to attract such a diverse group of people. By 'mixing' the sessions, the possibility of interactions could be reinforced.

- please, remind presenters to leave more time for reading their conclusions - usually their last but one slide - instead proceeding immediately to the last slide showing the acknowledgements

**General thoughts about the meeting**

- Overall (:-) it's been great fun! thanx lots!

- Thanks for an excellent and stimulating conference!

- I think the ASSC conferences are very good. Keep up the good work.

- I think this meeting was one of the best - I got a good vibe from many people, many good discussions, very friendly atmosphere, good mix of topics/talks, interesting new stuff (e.g. animal metacognition), and most people seemed to be very happy with the meeting. Excellent job!
Thank you! Very nice conference. High-quality scientific programme. The best conference I have attended in last years.

Great conference. Thoroughly enjoyed. Great location.

Thanks for a great event!

Well done!

On the whole, it was a great conference and helped remind me why I was in the field (which, from the depths of PhD thesis write-up, I find it very easy to forget nowadays). Thank you!

Patrick, Geraint and all the organizers made a great job.

Thanks for an amazing conference!

A beautifully run conference. The organizers can be proud.

Thanks for this wonderful conference! I had fun.

The organizers pulled together an excellent conference. I filled an entire pad of paper with notes -- 35 hours of conferencing, and almost all of them informative, even inspiring. The conference also had the effect of increasing the solidarity and identity for the ASSC. Also, the tone of it all was friendly, supportive, and collaborative. This is exceptional, and can carry forward I hope.

Keep up the good work, have a wonderful summer.

No, except despite a couple of beefs, I thought the conference was excellent in general. Great job!

Many thanks to the organizers for putting on such a good meeting - very informative, balanced and enjoyable!

Overall, still an excellent conference.

Great job among organizers and ASSC people.

It's the best conference of the year for me. Sadly I feel that Las Vegas was a poor choice, I have heard many say that they would not go. I too will think twice before deciding to come. CalTech and Memphis were fine with a strong local academic pull. LV seems to have none.

I am impressed by the good quality and stimulating atmosphere of ASSC conferences in general. This is particularly the case for this one. Congratulations!

THANKS for organising ASSC10! It has been one of the best conferences! Good quality, good atmosphere, nice surroundings, excellent people :)

The organisers were very kind.

I enjoyed it.

Overall, the conference was excellent: well-organized, friendly atmosphere, and thought-provoking talks of a very high academic standard. I guess, just keep it up!

This ASSC meeting for me as a student member was one of the most interesting meetings I attended. Unfortunately this correlated with my limited amount of time. Thx to the organization committee. You’ve done a great job.

Yes, I’m sorry that only 1 in 3 meetings will now be held in Europe, since this will mean only attending 1 in 3 years.

Very much enjoyed the meeting and getting an insight into state of art in consciousness research.

This is an excellent conference! The best in the field. That the big shots gave poor talks is evidence of progress in the field, enabled by this conference. Lunches at conference important for fostering cooperation.

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference and personally felt I took a lot away from it. On a personal level, I will not go to America until certain laws are changed concerning the rights of foreign nationals. I will be keen to attend future conferences outside America or within America once they change their stance.
Comments/suggestions:

i. There were some complaints about the role of philosophy at the meeting. However, I feel that the role of philosophy was about right. The reality is that the ASSC has about 25% of attendees who are philosophers; moreover they have been instrumental in the foundation and formation of the organization. It is appropriate that philosophy is represented at the meeting in about the level that it currently is.

ii. The conference booklet was generally perceived as good. A few omissions occurred that could be avoided in future years: email addresses of attendees; maps of all conference locations; information about lunches; location and information about student social. There were some suggestions about organizing abstracts in the booklet thematically, rather than alphabetically. This seems to be a relatively minor issue. My feeling is that alphabetically is easy for the local organizer to generate, and more importantly much more robust to minor changes of format; it also fits with the general sense of the conference as a smallish non-hierarchical event.

Closing remarks

Judging by the many positive remarks left at the end of the survey the conference was generally regarded as a great success. The important lesson to keep in mind here that what people want are good academic content (which was generally high) and are much more forgiving for other problems (e.g., a poor banquet). The other subtler element of making a conference successful is that there must be plenty of opportunities for people to interact socially. This can happen in many forms: providing adequate time at luncheon to interact; providing lunch at a fixed location so people can meet; pointing to a suitable local bar where people can meet between sessions; providing adequate time at social events for people to talk.
Appendix A: Contributed suggestions

Tutorial styles:

- There's a trend that people start to use workshops as a way to promote their own theory. I think this should be discouraged in favor of other genuine workshops of a more pedagogical flavor.

- It would be nice if the distinction between workshops and talks could be reinforced. In recent years, too many workshops have seemed like little more than introductions to the author’s own work. (Here I’m judging just by the titles and summaries, since I haven’t chosen those workshops to attend!)

- More of a balance of questions and talking

- Please try to take the opportunity of the workshops to use time to go to a deep thorough understanding of something, the basics again, but at a higher level of understanding - it is not the forum to prove the extent of what the speaker can cover.

- It may be a good idea for workshops to demand a more active attitude from the participants. I suppose it is common to turn workshops into presentations or lectures with some questions. But I do not find this approach most effective.

- Maybe preliminary to the meeting, some short-duration (3-5 min) specific comments or relevant contributions from some of the attendees could be asked to be prepared and coordinated with what the main presenters’ have to offer.

- In general, please promote more discussion among participants. Give more concise and tighter presentations with fewer slides. More discussion prior to conference would help.

Suggested content for future tutorials

- Emotion & consciousness

  I would like to see a workshop jointly chaired by a philosopher and a scientist to discuss in positive terms how each of these disciplines can contribute to the other. The workshop should be in the form of brief introductory statements followed by extended discussion by all participants, rather than extended presentations followed by brief a discussion.

  The relation between unconscious dream experience and conscious every day behavior.

- Masking, change blindness with demonstrations

- Yes: the functional significance of sensory awareness (i.e. what good is it - empirically - to be aware of a stimulus, ever and above having an implicit behavioral response). This is an empirical issue, not a philosophical one. I highly recommend inviting Bjorn Merker to present his thoughts on this topic and also to lead a section on it. Axel Cleeremans would also very likely have something to say about it.

- I’d like to see a workshop on the terminological chaos is consciousness studies. It is almost the case that no two approaches mean the same thing by the key terms, including notably the term ‘consciousness’. I talked to Joe Dial about this and he is interested but I got no response from the people I approached, not so far.

- Social function of consciousness

- In line with the Eurocores program: Consciousness in a social context

- “Basic techniques in psychological investigations of consciousness” “Basic techniques in imaging modalities used in the investigation of consciousness” By making a few of the workshops explicitly targeting a basic audience e.g. students, you may “select away” heterogeneity in audiences and provide a very fulfilling experience for students.

- How about a workshop that follows up on Driver’s talk on crossmodal integration.

- I hope you’ll continue to present phenomenology (of the serious, Husserlian kind). Also workshops that review neuroscience methodologies in detail, so it's possible to see how methods constrain results.
- self-awareness
- I think that workshops on computational topics are not a bad thing. Owen Holland might be a good bet.
- Inevitably perhaps the focus has become on empirical neuroscience with less clinical or subjective aspects represented. I am not sure how to redress a balance but raise it as an issue.
- Non-visual consciousness (e.g. emotion, sensation, olfaction, hearing)
- I would probably repeat our workshop on attention & consciousness
- Altered states of consciousness
- Imaging techniques
- I would be interested in something on the practical and theoretical approaches to magnetoencephalography (MEG). In association with this maybe the limitations of the various scanning techniques and the appropriateness of certain cognitive paradigms for teasing out the neural correlates of consciousness. I would also like to have a workshop to discuss peoples’ visions of what the mind could be and the possible functional processes driving it? This workshop would be run in the spirit of an abduction approach as suggested by Ned Block at the conference. Having said the above I suspect I will not attend Las Vegas conference but would be very keen to attend the following one in Asia.
- Mathematical methods for phenomenology
- Animal consciousness (assessment and ethical implications) - vast amounts to talk about!
- I would like workshop about the altered states of consciousness from a clearly scientific perspective.
- Historical look at how understanding of the brain as the seat of consciousness has developed (from early Cartesians like Descartes and doctors like Willis in the 17th c. until the Neuronal theories of the 19th c. as refined in the present day. (Possibly include other organs, or mechanism such as hormones and Penrose/Hameroff Microtubules).

**Future keynote speakers**

- Suggestions for future speakers: Patrick Haggard; Jesse Prinz; Antonio Damasio; Jaegwon Kim; Alva Noe; Jaak Panskepp
- Giulio Tononi
- Patrick welcoming address was entertaining and informative, but it ran way over time.
- Dan Wegner
- I’d like to see a symposium on the role of conceptual analysis in consciousness studies. The Koch/Bayne session made it very clear that even the top people in the field have no idea.
- Thomas Metzinger (as keynote speaker)
- I recently came across some new work by Irving Biederman relating his Geon theory of Object recognition to consciousness
- Prof. Alain Berthoz, College de France Prof. Dan Zahavi, Copenhagen Prof. Sean Kelly, Princeton/Harvard
- Alumit Ishai is one of the top fMRI researchers, and fully versed in ASSC issues.
- Would like to hear from John Searle.
- Damasio
- Focus is largely on visual consciousness. speakers on affective consciousness (e.g. rolls, panksepp, damasio) would be interesting to hear
- Greg Ashby on explicit and implicit brain systems of categorization
Integrating psychological and philosophical approaches to consciousness research would be more satisfying than just assuming that NCCs will do the trick.

It might be very useful if a top (neuro)scientist, who is skeptical towards consciousness research, would give a talk and argue what the field of consciousness is lacking.

Less on Visual Consciousness and more on conscious states

Future symposia

- Suggestion: ontogeny and phylogeny of consciousness
- Not really...eventually, I'll think of some symposium topics. Come to think of it, maybe one on motor activation paradigms--there's a lot going on with that lately.
- I'm ambivalent about the proper role for philosophers in symposia. Their best place would seem to be as commentators on the science presented, but in practice this time that led to superficial responses. So their other role could be as presenters of their own views, when these have been developed to enough depth to warrant a useful full presentation. Future topics could include neurophenomenology (and Marbach could be a speaker), psychiatric conditions like schizophrenia, MPD, PTSD, etc., "altered states".

Memory and Imagination: It may be hard to find enough appropriate speakers

- topic: sleep? maybe from speakers not associated with the ASSC?
- Neurological impairment as a disease of consciousness.
- Animal consciousness/evolution of consciousness
- Decision-making, attentional control
- Intentionality and intentional relations from philosophical, developmental-psychol. and neuroscientific perspectives (Crane, Barresi, ...) 
- An interesting topic could be on free will and the timing of events in the brain
- I found the philosophy talks generally of lesser quality: a lot of old debates, elaborating on the same pros and cons, while there is so much happening in philosophy that could be interesting to the consciousness debate nowadays, in particular in phenomenology (Gallagher, Žekavić, De Preester, Depraz).
- Since there are questions about the relevance of philosophy, why not a symposium where this case is made? And not necessarily by old standards in the field, but by young, up and coming philosophers who are doing interesting work that engages empirical work as well. I think this is needed as the underlying tension between empirical types and philosophers was palpable and unhelpful.

Yes - prediction and awareness

- Logothetis, Schall, Norensome, Maunsell, Reynolds, etc Neurophysiologists with big names who don’t feel bad talking about consciousness. One way to invite them is to have a symposium on decision-making, which is currently studied very extensively in physiology.

General

- it was leaning quite heavily on the scientific side...I'd love to hear a couple of talks on conceptual topics or philosophy of science
- include a presentation of some work on higher order theories in the body of symposium
- more not so "straightforward" topics like paranormal phenomena, drugs, meditation...(all based on a scientific view, of course)
- the relationship between phenomenal awareness and pre-conscious processing. What constitutes "phenomenal" and what constitutes awareness? I think this is a way more vital question than the "access" type awareness, which is simply a different way of studying attention. Speakers: Victor Lamme, Ned Block, Michael Snodgrass
- A session on philosophical psychopathology would interest me.
- i’ve mentioned these previously in the survey - in general i would like to see more about the relation of emotion and consciousness as there was almost nothing on this topic this year.

- Steve Lehar would be an interesting character

- Larry Jacoby

- David Chalmers, John Searle, Henry Pierce Stapp

- More on conscious will, and volitional processes please!

- Developmental biology/psychology! Maybe a symposium (could include animal consciousness as well, overall question could be development of self/self-consciousness,...)?

- Automata theory


- Bjorn Merker

- Language and consciousness is seriously underrepresented. And it would be nice to have some philosophers who actually have something new to say to the rest of the consciousness community. Dennett and Dretske are major contributors but have not had anything new to say on the topic for at least a decade. Plus, what they do have to say strikes most non-philosophers as not shedding much light on anything.

- more social events (e.g. music, architecture, galleries, theatre...) to relax and to be able to see consciousness from non-scientific perspectives :-)

- Zeki would be interesting. Maybe someone from Matsuzawa’s group that works with chimpanzees, to continue work related to JD Smith’s excellent talk. Carrasco and her work on how attention might change phenomenal perception, too.

- Evolutionary psychology Cognitive anthropology

- Neuropsychology was surprisingly poorly represented. Issued raised by the literature on confabulating patients following Anterior CoArtery might be of interest.

- Have to think more about this.

- Reflexive models of consciousness - might be useful to see if the empirical work on neural recurrent pathways could be tied into philosophical work on reflexive nature of conscious intentionality.

- I feel that evolutionary approach to consciousness should be a topic per se in ASSC conferences.

- “Criteria for a general theory of consciousness” “Psychiatric disease in consciousness research” “Complexity theory” ”Role of computation and mathematics in consciousness research”

- Perhaps an entire morning or afternoon session devoted to animal consciousness. Bjorn Merker, who has thought a great deal about this topic, would be an excellent speaker.

- The neural basis of action selection & performance monitoring

- (Mentioned above...) The fields in ASSC still seem to tilt toward males, especially in the older set. Continued thought might go toward gender balance and diversity. ASSC efforts to nurture younger researchers are excellent and should be continued, perhaps developed further.

- Frank Tong

- Self-awareness

- Language development?

- In general over the years there is a lot of repetition of the same “famous” speakers that do not always have something interesting to say (in my opinion).

- I would like to see linguists and developmental psychologists contribute. Speakers: Edelman, Bermudez, Searle,
I would have liked to hear S. Dehaene shed light on his latest work. I strongly feel that the topic of "unconsciousness" was not represented enough, although it was slightly brought up in many of the talks. This topic should be given more attention.

The neural basis of visual awareness, Pascual-Leone

Topic: the role of phenomenology in neuroscientific research (methodology)

I love philosophy, but this (again) turned out to be disappointed love. See my comments on Dretske.

Jaap Panksepp Kent Berridge

Self-consciousness is always a winner; Smith’s talk on his work with animals and their uncertainty response was quite interesting.


Jonathon Schooler.

More on language and/or self

Model for evolutionary development of consciousness; from animals to humans Onset of being aware of a self in children

Qualia (a discussion of) pharmacology & psychoactive substances (again a discussion, possibly in the symposium format)

More speakers who hold a metaview, or view that contextualizes the work in the field as a whole--- as Greenwald’s talk did. This would help minimize the semantic issues that seem to loom so large.

Emergence, Decision-Making Achim Stephan

Altered states of consciousness

Kinds of intentionality and intentional relations (in humans, infants, animals) A. Damasio, John Barresi, Tim Crane

Quantitative measures of consciousness

A plenary symposium on animal consciousness would be timely.

More philosophers!

Dehaene

Overall I enjoyed the mix of speakers and topics. It might be interesting to get the perspective of someone like a Tibetan lama. I know this is not scientific but an outside perspective never hurts. There approach to consciousness is very structured and also debated heavily. They also have universities but obviously quite different to the Western system.

Nick Humphrey

Affective consciousness (rolls, damasio, panksepp, ledoux) evolutionary approaches to the possible function of consciousness across species

Consciousness & decision making, Pain, Philosophers from a Quineann (post-empiricist) tradition

Chalmers, McGinn and Churchland

something seems to be happening at the level of unconscious processing: Bock, Lamme, Snodgrass, Dehaene - maybe something starts to take form there: an unexpected understanding of the complexity of unconscious processing, rearticulating the coordinates for the consciousness debate? A promising avenue it seems...

using pain to study consciousness as possible topics.

More topics on neuroscience of stages of sleep; PVS; etc.

theory of mind and consciousness
Topics: relatively stronger emphasis on biochemistry of consciousness, including anaesthetic effects; relatively strong emphasis on causal intervention to consciousness/awareness. Speakers: invite some leading neurosurgeons who have something substantial to say about consciousness.

Haikonen (on conscious machines) Risto Nataanen on mismatch negativity

The talk on the uncertainty response was extremely interesting, and although I missed the lunchtime discussion on animal consciousness (I forgot), I think this topic is really fascinating and can shed light on human consciousness.
Appendix B: ASSC-10 Oxford Conference Survey

1. What is your membership status with the ASSC?
   - ASSC Full Member
   - ASSC Affiliate Member
   - ASSC Student Member
   - 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)
   - ASSC5: Durham, North Carolina (2001)
   - 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. Do you have any suggestions for how students could be better served by next year's meeting?

7. How would you rate the quality of the workshops you attended?
   Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  did not attend

M1 Eduard Marbach: Phenomenological methods for investigating consciousness
M2 Kevin O'Regan: The sensorimotor approach to phenomenal consciousness revisited
M3 Nao Tsuchiya & Christof Koch: The relationship between selective attention and consciousness
M4 Rolf Verleger: Event-related EEG potential correlates of conscious perception: The P3 and N2pc components
A1 Igor Aleksander, Ron Chrisley, and Murray Shanahan: Machine models of consciousness
A2 Alan Cowey: Exploring aspects of consciousness by TMS
A3 David Edelman and Anil Seth: A scientific framework for the study of animal consciousness
A4 David Rosenthal: Higher-Order Theories of consciousness

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

9. Do you have any suggestions for future workshops presenters or topics?

10. How would you rate the overall quality and relevance of the talks you attended?
    Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Did not attend

Patrick Wilken: ASSC10 welcoming address
Sang-Hun Lee: The role of attention in propogation and cortical waves during binocular rivalry
Daniel Dennett: Consciousness: How science changes the subject
Jon Driver: Selective attention, multisensory integration, and perceptual awareness in the normal and damaged human brain
J David Smith: Uncertainty monitoring and metacognition by humans and nonhuman animals
Fred Dretske: What change blindness teaches about consciousness
Anthony Greenwald: Catching consciousness unaware: Using modus tollen establish what conscious cognition does
Martha Farah: Neuroethics

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

12. How would you rate the plenary symposia you attended?
    Poor  Fair  Good  Excellent  Did not attend
Symposium 1: Recurrent processing and visual consciousness (Walsh, Lamme, Block, Lau)
Symposium 2: 2005 Tom Slick Research Award in consciousness (Koch, Blascovich, Schurger, Snodgrass)
Symposium 3: Action, perception, and consciousness (Farne, Kelly, Milner)
Symposium 4: Brain-reading of consciousness (Haynes, Goebel, Metzinger, de Vignemont)

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

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

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

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

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

18. How would you rate the overall quality of the opening reception in the University Natural History Museum?
   Poor    Fair    Good    Excellent    Did not attend

19. Do you have any comments about this year's reception or suggestions for next year's reception in Las Vegas?

20. This year food was provided at lunchtime as part of the basic conference package. How would you rate the overall quality of the lunches provided?
   Poor    Fair    Good    Excellent    Did not eat

21. Do you have any comments about the lunches provided at St. Anne's College or suggestions about lunches that may be provided in Las Vegas?

22. The cost of this year's banquet was £35. Would it be better to find a cheaper alternative at the next year's meeting even if this means poorer quality food and wine?
23. How did you find the quality of the food and wine at this year's conference dinner?
   Poor        Fair        Good        Excellent        Did not attend

24. In general would you chose a vegetarian option if it were available?
   Yes/No

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

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

27. 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?

28. Do you recommend any changes in the registration process or other administrative details?

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

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