

# PENROSE CONFERENCES



SCIENCE ■ STEWARDSHIP ■ SERVICE

30 December 2008

The Penrose Conferences were established in 1969 by the Geological Society of America as a further step in its service to the geosciences. Named in honor of Richard A.F. Penrose, Jr., a benefactor of the Society, the conferences are patterned after the highly successful Neil Elbridge Gordon Conferences in the field of chemistry.

The conferences, usually five or more days in duration, are designed to encourage open and frank discussion of ideas in an informal atmosphere. The conveners of each Penrose Conference have the option, if they desire, to publish the proceedings of the conference, including abstracts as appropriate, with the first right of refusal of this publication to be given to GSA. If the convener plans to publish from the inception, it should be so stated in the conference proposal. Participation in any conference carries with it the ethical obligation of not using, in any way, any original information that may be revealed in discussion by other participants.

Any person who has an active interest in a conference subject may make application to attend a Penrose Conference. Announcements of future conferences appear in *GSA Today* and *GSA Connection* e-newsletter. Other scientific publications can be considered, but a cost may be associated with this and will be added as a line item in the budget (*Geotimes*, *Episodes*, *AAPG Explorer*, *Eos*, and other scientific publications).

After inviting key speakers, the convener selects participants from applications received; his decision is final and not subject to appeal. Acceptances are not transferable.

Limited conference funds may be available to assist graduate students whose thesis research is relevant to a conference subject. Students who qualify are urged to make application to attend.

The Society is the principal sponsor of the Penrose Conferences; however, it welcomes other societies, organizations, and institutions as co-sponsors.

The Society no longer makes grants to the conferences; each must be self-supporting. GSA gives administrative support through the early stages of the procedures.

Once the Society approves the conference, GSA's professional meeting coordinator (PMC) assists conveners with budget preparation, site selection, hotel arrangements, contract negotiations, menu selection, secretarial support, and the like. The PMC also ensures that the meeting is financially viable and ensures that logistical arrangements are consistent with Penrose Conference rules and procedures. Turning over these tasks to the PMC allows the conveners to devote their full attention to the scientific program. In the case of meetings outside of the U.S.A., the PMC generally will work with a local organizer at the site to ensure that the same goals are met. Because financial responsibility for the conference must be clearly defined, the choice of a local organizer is subject to approval by GSA.

Experience indicates that the ideal size for full conference participation is 60 participants; however, both smaller and larger conferences may be considered. The desirable duration of the conferences is

at least five days.

"Penrose Conference General Rules and Guidelines," "Guidelines for Preparation and Writing a Penrose Conference Proposal," and "Guidelines for Reports on Penrose Conferences for *GSA Today*" are available upon request from the GSA Meetings Department. These guidelines are designed to assist in the preparation of a proposal and include a list of requirements that must be a part of every conference proposal.

Proposals are considered by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums, and it is their responsibility to accept or reject them. The Committee also recommends and implements guidelines for the success of the program.

In acceptance of a proposal, the Committee may offer advice which in some cases may be a condition of acceptance. The Committee chair will address an advisory letter to the conveners calling attention to any matters that seem likely to pose a problem that must be resolved if the conference is to be successful.

Any member of the Geological Society of America may submit a Penrose Conference proposal. Questions regarding the conferences or requests for copies of the guidelines should be addressed to the Becky Sundeen at GSA Headquarters, telephone number 303-357-1041, or email at [bsundeen@geosociety.org](mailto:bsundeen@geosociety.org).

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Revised 30 December 2008 [penconf\packetnew\rule09]

# PENROSE CONFERENCE GENERAL RULES AND GUIDELINES

30 December 2008

## Purpose

The Penrose Conferences were established by the Geological Society of America in 1969 as an important effort in its promotion of the earth sciences. The conferences provide the opportunity for exchange of current information and exciting ideas pertaining to the science of geology and related fields. They are intended to stimulate and enhance individual and collaborative research and to accelerate the advance of the science by the interactions and development of new ideas.

The conferences consist of a critical mass of active scientists from the Society, the national and international science communities, and students, sequestered in an attractive meeting place for several days of focused discussion. The participants do not seek simply to resolve technical controversies; their objectives are to provide stimulus and excitement for their field, to air new ideas and develop new associations, and to provoke new research on important questions.

## Subject

Ideal subjects for conferences are those earth science topics for which recent work suggests a potential for further significant advances in the near future. Each conference subject should be under current investigation and active discussion by able researchers in the field and/or in the laboratory. Topics should be broad enough so that a range of specialists can discuss them from several points of view, but not so broad that a lack of communication can develop.

A Penrose Conference should not duplicate the subject of a recent conference.

## Conveners

Conveners must have technical competence and be knowledgeable about current activities in the specialized fields that are to be represented at a conference. Responsibility for organizing a conference **must be shared by at least two conveners**, each of whom can draw upon his or her own experience and expertise in developing a well-integrated, effective conference program that will foster communication and stimulate research progress among experts in diverse but related fields. **At least one of the conveners must be a member of GSA.**

GSA is looking for Penrose Conference conveners who have demonstrated a combination of somewhat unique but important experiences and personality traits. The success of the conference is very much dependent upon the conveners' organizational skills, professional experience and expertise relating to the conference subject, and to the conveners' interpersonal skills which are required to deal positively and effectively with the many personality types of the participants.

If one of the main conveners withdraws during the formative stages of an approved conference, the question **MUST** be referred back to the Committee on Penrose Conferences for approval of the substitute convener.

## Size, Time

It is essential that the conferences be informal. Groups should be small enough that personal discussion among all participants is encouraged, and large enough to provide diversity and depth. As an empirical rule,

the maximum number for success is about 80. Conferences that reach 90 participants will require the full approval of the Penrose Conference Committee. Normally, the minimum number required to convene a conference is 50.

Typically, conferences in the past have lasted five to seven days. Participants are expected to attend the entire conference. Conferences that are longer than five days tend to force premature departure.

A period of approximately nine to twelve months between the date of approval by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and the date of the conference is normally required. In no case should there be less than six months between the time of the conference announcement and the conference dates. Announcements appear in *GSA Today* and *GSA Connection* e-newsletter. Other scientific publication may be considered for paid advertising, including *Geotimes*, *Episodes*, *AAPG Explorer*, *Eos*. Any paid ads will need to be budgeted for during the budget process.

Care should be taken to avoid scheduling conferences at the same time as other scientific meetings, especially other GSA meetings, including other Penrose Conferences. Conveners should check the calendar of events in *Geotimes* before proposing a date. A schedule of future approved and recommended Penrose Conferences will be provided prospective conveners with these general guidelines.

### **Location**

Essential qualities of a good site are that it be removed from the distraction of other meetings and other demands on the time and attention of the participants. The site should offer adequate meeting facilities and comfortable surroundings where participants can live, eat, work, and relax together. Climate, accessibility, meals, sleeping accommodations, recreational facilities, and economy should all be considered in selecting a site.

There are no restrictions about holding conferences anywhere in the world. Conveners may propose one or more specific sites or may suggest a geographical area within which the professional meeting coordinator can negotiate a specific site. Final site selection must be approved by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums. Negotiations with the meeting venue should not happen before a proposal has been approved by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums.

### **Participation**

Anyone interested in attending a specific conference is encouraged to contact the conveners of that conference. An invitation is not required for application to participate; however, conveners initially should invite a few key speakers necessary to the organization and success of the conference.

Aside from these invitations issued in the early planning stages of a conference, the conveners use indications of interest from those actively working in the field to complete the list of conference participants.

The final decision on participation will be made by the conveners, whose decision shall not be subject to appeal. Acceptances for participation are not transferable.

All participants are expected to live at the conference site. Spouses, families, and others who are not registered participants are requested not to visit the conference site and are not allowed to participate in conference activities.

All participants are expected to attend the entire conference, and all must pay the full conference registration fee. Exceptions may be made only for invited key speakers whose attendance is deemed essential by the

conveners even though they may not be able to be present for the entire conference.

### **Student Participants**

Conveners are encouraged to invite enough graduate students to make up at least 10% of the total participants. A subsidy of up to \$4000 may be available from the GSA Foundation to permit conveners to offer reduced registration fees to students (available funds are dependent upon amount of money in Penrose Conferences Fund). Students who pay a reduced registration fee may be asked to help with meeting logistics (e.g., audio-visual set-up and/or operation; field-trip logistics and/or vehicle operation; etc.).

### **Sponsorship**

The Geological Society of America is the principal sponsor of the Penrose Conferences; however, the Society welcomes other societies, organizations, and institutions as co-sponsors. Conveners must identify sponsors in their proposals, and the Committee on Penrose Conferences reserves the right to approve co-sponsors at the time the proposals are being considered. Recognition is given to co-sponsors in the conference announcements, as well as during the conference. Sponsorship by GSA requires that these rules and guidelines **MUST** be followed completely. If the co-sponsor has guidelines, and if they are available, a copy should be submitted with the proposal. It is the responsibility of the conveners to check those guidelines for compatibility with the GSA rules and guidelines.

### **Financing**

The Society accepts fiscal responsibility for Penrose Conferences only if GSA's professional meeting coordinator is employed because of the need for GSA to maintain financial control if it is financially responsible for the conference. The services of GSA's professional meeting coordinator may be waived but, under these circumstances, GSA requires a written commitment of financial responsibility from a suitable organization that has financial control over the conference.

Conveners must prudently budget their conference funds in such a way as to break even. A preliminary budget must be submitted with the initial proposal (GSA Meetings Staff can assist if needed). If GSA's professional meeting coordinator is employed, conveners are expected to furnish the meeting coordinator with their anticipated expenses, i.e., personal, institutional, or miscellaneous, along with the coordinator fees listed below. These will be included in the conference budget. Only those expenses included in this budget may be paid from conference funds. If surplus funds are generated, they must be deposited in the Penrose Conference Fund of the GSA Foundation where they will be available for future student support.

#### **Professional Meeting Coordinator Fees**

Complete Planning by GSA Coordinator	\$115
Required fee to come back to GSA if alternate meeting coordinator is hired	\$30

Whenever possible, conveners should obtain institutional or other support for their individual travel and registration expenses. When this support is not available, reasonable costs may be built into the conference budget to defray the cost of their travel and registration. This must be approved by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums and the GSA Executive Director. Receipts are required for the expenditures. If technical equipment is necessary for the conference, conveners should first check with GSA HQ to see if equipment is available first through GSA. If equipment needs to be purchased, it must be budgeted, and is then the property of GSA. The equipment must be sent to GSA HQ after the conference is

over and will be used for future conferences and field trips.

Honoraria will not be paid to any participant or speaker.

At the conclusion of a conference, a written financial report must be submitted to the Executive Director. The report is prepared by the financially responsible party, that is, by GSA's professional meeting coordinator if (s)he is employed for the meeting, or by the organization that has accepted financial responsibility, if GSA's professional meeting coordinator is not employed.

All sponsorship from private and/or corporate sources, and contributions from the National Science Foundation and other governmental agencies for the support of Penrose Conferences should be made to the Geological Society of America, P.O. Box 9140, Boulder, CO 80301, and be earmarked for a specific conference.

### **Initiation of a Proposal**

Anyone interested in convening a Penrose Conference may submit a proposal, but **at least one of the conveners must be a member of the Geological Society of America**. Guidelines for the preparation of a proposal accompany these general guidelines.

It is important to remember that a list of key speakers/key participants and their willingness to attend the conference, as well as a meeting schedule or an itinerary (in the case of a field-trip conference), are essential parts of a conference proposal and **MUST** be included with the proposal when it is submitted to the Executive Director.

Additional information not included in this document may be obtained by writing or calling:

Becky Sundeen  
The Geological Society of America  
3300 Penrose Place, P.O. Box 9140  
Boulder, CO 80301-9140  
(303) 357-1041

bsundeen@geosociety.org

Proposals for Penrose Conferences should be sent to the Executive Director at the same address.

The Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums reviews the proposals as they are received. Conveners will receive notification of the status of their proposal within 4-6 weeks after it is received at GSA Headquarters. In the acceptance of a proposal, the Committee may offer advice, which in some cases may be a condition of acceptance. If it is, the Committee chair will address an advisory letter to the conveners calling their attention to matters that seem likely to pose problems and that must be resolved if the conference is to be successful. **The Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums reserves full authority for final approval.**

A meeting schedule or an itinerary that has been significantly altered **AFTER** the approval of a proposal **MUST** be referred back to the Committee on Penrose Conferences for reconsideration and approval.

### **Program**

Care must be taken not to over-structure the program and to allow sufficient time for free discussion by all

participants. It is important to note that all participants need not expect to make formal presentations. Contributions may be presented in informal discussions or in poster sessions. Detailed suggestions for structuring a program are provided in "Guidelines for Preparation and Writing a Penrose Conference Proposal" which accompany these general guidelines:

- Penrose Conference abstracts are permitted to be posted on a web site, however, authors must be told before they submit their abstracts, that they *may* appear on a website;
- That abstracts posted on the web are not to be considered a formal publication, but rather as a means of distributing information to the participants of a particular Penrose Conference.
- That the URL website address will be included in the invitation letter to participants but will not be otherwise distributed (i.e., published in *GSA Today*, reproduced in Division newsletters, etc.).

### **Field Trips**

Field trips continue to be an integral part of Penrose Conferences. If a field trip is planned, care should be given to the quality and appropriateness of the outcrops and minimizing travel distance. In some cases, cost and travel time could be reduced by including the field trip to or from the conference site.

### **Participants with Special Needs**

GSA is committed to making Conferences accessible to all people interested in attending. Conveners should be aware and prepared for the possible use of auxiliary aids or services that may be needed by some participants because of a disability.

### **Conference Reports and Publicity**

#### **Pre-Conference Announcement**

As soon as the conveners have been informed by the Executive Director that their conference has been approved, they must prepare a conference announcement for publication in appropriate scientific journals.

The draft announcement should be sent to the professional meeting coordinator for editing and subsequent forwarding to the Executive Director and the editors of scientific journals.

Conveners are encouraged to write a press release before their Penrose Conference to be released by GSA to the local and national press prior to their Penrose Conference.

As soon as a preliminary program is available, this should be submitted to the Executive Director for posting on the Penrose Conferences World Wide Web page.

#### **Progress Reports**

During the planning stages of the conferences, the meeting coordinator will make periodic progress reports to the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums. This is usually handled between the meeting coordinator and the Committee chair by telephone or email.

#### **Post-Conference News Articles**

As soon as the conference has been completed, the conveners are required to send to the Executive Director a brief evaluation of the administrative and logistical aspects of the conference based on comments by the

participants and the experience of the conveners, as well as suggestions for the improvement of the conference format as a whole.

Within three months after the conference, the conveners are required to send a general article to the Executive Director for publication in GSA Today covering the most interesting scientific and technical aspects of the conference. This article will be limited to two pages, or approximately 800 words (including the participant list). If conveners wish to expand their remarks, the expanded report can be posted on the GSA Website.

This article should report the main trends of thought and discussions that prevailed at the conference. It should not include specific data or concepts for which individual participants expect to receive priority through the publication of their papers in journals of their choice. In balancing the opposing needs to inform and to preserve priority, the conveners must perform this task with responsibility and delicacy.

The conveners have the option of preparing similar articles for submission to other journals, but only after a letter of acceptance to publish the initial article has been received from the editor of GSA Today.

The editor may send the article for review; some articles may require revision as a result. Suggested guidelines for the preparation of the article are:

- Tell where and when the conference was held, what the objective was and whether it was achieved, and what happened at the conference.
- Avoid discussion of the weather, food, accommodations, and the like.
- Include a list of the participants.
- Articles must be brief and concise. In no case should they exceed six (6) double-spaced, type-written manuscript pages.
- Articles may be written in individual style and should avoid formality.

### **Post-Conference Proceedings**

The conveners of each Penrose Conference have the option, if they desire, to publish the proceedings of the conference, including abstracts as appropriate, with the first right of refusal of this publication to be given to GSA. If the conveners plan to publish from the inception, it should be so stated in the conference proposal.

### **Post-Conference Symposia**

It is anticipated that symposia at GSA meetings or elsewhere may develop from some conferences. These should consist of a related series of formal papers, each reflecting the author's own ideas, rather than a synthesis of what was presented at a particular conference.

### **Post-Conference Discussions**

The Society hopes and expects that all participants will freely discuss with their colleagues the significant results of their participation. The intent is that the conferences shall promote the generation of new concepts and nurture new research efforts in all phases of the earth sciences.

### **Adherence to Guidelines**

These guidelines, formulated by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and approved by the Council, provide rules based on experience gained from past conferences. Changes and improvements will be incorporated as experience dictates. Once approval of a proposal has been given by the Society, the conveners are fully responsible for the conference in accordance with the guidelines; and their acceptance implies agreement to abide by them.

In cases of flagrant violation of the guidelines, the Executive Director is empowered to take appropriate action, including postponement or cancellation of the conference.

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(May 1981; Revised November 1983, May 1984, May 1985, October 28, 1985, October 27, 1987, November 1, 1988, May 6, 1989, October 15, 1991, October 25, 1993, October 26, 1994, November 6, 1995, October 28, 1996, May 10, 1997, October 20, 1997, October 25, 1999, April 25, 2001, June 11, 2001, May 8, 2002, September 3, 2002.) [penconf\packetnew\peng04]

**GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION AND WRITING**  
**A PENROSE CONFERENCE PROPOSAL**

As of 31 December 2008

The key to an efficient and prompt review of any proposal is that the proposal contain all of the information needed by the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums to make a decision. Each proposal submitted to the Society must contain the following information, outlined in the format set forth below. Proposals should be sent to the Executive Director of the Society, preferably as email attachments in either MSWord document format or in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), but proposals also may be submitted as paper hard copy via conventional mail. A proposal should be accompanied by a simple cover letter signed by all conveners. Conveners will receive notification of the status of their proposal within 4-6 weeks after it is received at GSA Headquarters.

Proposals need not be elaborate, but must contain enough information to be understandable to members of the Committee on Penrose Conference and Field Forums. Of the five Committee members, only one or two, if that, are apt to be close to your field. Please beware of unnecessary jargon. Define (as with short parenthetical expression) any unusual terms.

Proposers are reminded that complete and adequate proposals are essential. Experience has shown that a year or more is generally needed between approval date and conference date; thus, inadequate proposals may result in the loss of the hoped-for date.

**Proposal Outline**

1. ***A short expression of the subject, by title.*** Normally, this title would be the same one that is used on announcements, publicity, and in any correspondence regarding the conference, even before it is approved.
2. ***A description of the subject.*** What is the conference all about? What is the objective of the conference? It is important to remember that the proposal will be evaluated by members of the Committee on Penrose Conferences and Field Forums who may not be intimately familiar with the subject of the proposed conference. It is critical that the proposal describe the significance and scientific rationale clearly, concisely, and with a minimum of discipline jargon.
3. ***A statement explaining how a conference on this subject will meet the purpose and objectives that have been set forth for the Penrose Conferences in the general guidelines.*** What new ideas, unresolved controversy, or potential future significant advances pertaining to the subject justify the need for a conference?

4. ***List of several key speakers and their field of interest, with an indication of their willingness and ability to participate.*** This indication normally would be in the form of letters to the convener from the key speakers. Documented phone calls are less satisfactory. This is a particularly critical item in the review of the proposal and **must** be included because the success of a conference is largely a function of who participates. It may be useful to distinguish between *keynote speakers* and *key participants*. A keynote speaker is invited to lead off a meeting session with a presentation that reviews the state of knowledge and defines the scope and agenda of the session. A handful of excellent keynote presentations can greatly enhance the success of a meeting. Key participants form a broader category that includes not only keynote speakers but other participants whose presence the conveners believe is sure to enhance the meeting. The total number of invited participants should not exceed 30% of the total attendance, thus leaving at least 70% of the space available for open application.

In preparing a conference proposal, prospective conveners may contact colleagues to build support by soliciting expressions of interest in the conference. In so doing, prospective conveners should recognize that a person thus contacted is likely to construe the solicitation as an invitation to participate in the conference. The number of such solicitations therefore should be limited accordingly.

5. ***A preliminary general outline of sessions.*** Even though preliminary, an outline of the schedule is important because it forces careful thought about relevance, organization, and treatment of subject matter. The schedule might include tentative titles and speakers for key presentations, as well as some indication of the gross structure of the program or how the time will be used. Meeting structure should allow sufficient time for input and discussion for all participants, not just key speakers. Such information permits evaluation of the reasonableness of the conference content in terms of the time available. Time must be scheduled for formal and informal discussions, and for poster sessions if these are planned. If a field trip is included, explain how it fits into the topic of the Conference. For conferences with field trips, an itinerary must be included.
6. ***A suggested geographic location or locations.*** The geographic location, and even the precise site of a conference, commonly will be dictated by a field trip plan, and little choice will be available. For conferences without associated field trips, a wider range of possibilities obviously will be possible, and alternate sites should be identified. Regardless, conveners planning to use a professional meeting coordinator are strongly advised against making formal contacts with the site management. Experience has been that a professional meeting coordinator can negotiate much better when such contact has not been made.
7. ***A choice of preferred and alternate dates (or at least a preference for the time of the year).*** In selecting the dates, refer to the appropriate discussion in the

Penrose Conference General Rules and Guidelines. Be sure to allow enough time, normally no less than one year, for processing the proposal and advertising the conference. Check the monthly calendar of events that appear in *GSA Today* and *Geotimes* for possible conflicts. A schedule of future approved and recommended Penrose Conferences will be provided prospective conveners with these guidelines.

8. ***Anticipated number of participants.*** If the anticipated number is above 80 or below 50, an explanation and justification should be included.
9. ***A description of the nature and logistics of any field trip that is a suggested part of the conference.*** How and when will the trip fit into the program? Generally, what is its length and destination? What forms of transportation will be needed? Will there be any difficulty in arranging this transportation?
10. ***A statement on any international participants who might be considered and the source and amount of anticipated financial support for their participation.*** For most conferences, international participation is essential for success, but in many cases the expense of overseas travel is prohibitive. Potential outside sources of funding for partially defraying the expenses of selected foreign participants should be identified, but no official contact with the source should be made until after the proposal has been approved.
11. ***A statement indicating the willingness of the conveners to abide by the Penrose Conference General Rules and Guidelines and specifically an indication of the understanding that Penrose Conferences are to be self-supporting.***  
Consequently, the budget (which is developed by the meetings coordinator in conjunction with the conveners) will typically include meals, lodging, field trip transportation, audio visual equipment, and administrative costs, including those of the meetings coordinator. If applicable, International conferences **MUST** list the names of any local coordinators or institutions and any anticipated service fees.
12. ***Identification of co-sponsors, if any, and their roles in the conference.*** If the co-sponsor has guidelines, and if they are available, a copy should be submitted with the proposal. It is the responsibility of the conveners to check those guidelines for compatibility with the GSA rules and guidelines.
13. ***List those research-oriented conferences or similar meetings that the proposer has been associated with organizing or convening. Curriculum vitae for each of the conveners, including telephone numbers and a list of publications and projects that qualify each for leading the proposed conference proposals are essential to speedy approval.***

14. ***Participants with special needs.*** GSA is committed to making Conferences accessible to all people interested in attending. Conveners should be aware and prepared for the possible use of auxiliary aids or services that may be needed by some participants because of a disability. (This Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) information will also appear under the ***Field Trips*** section in the ***Penrose Conference General Rules and Guidelines.***)
  
15. ***Preliminary Draft of Budget.*** A draft of the meeting budget should be included with your proposal. Items for the budget include: lodging (based on double occupancy), meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner for each day), facility/meeting room rental, audio visual equipment, poster boards (if needed), transportation and fuel costs, park or other entrance fees, guide books, shipping and miscellaneous supplies. Other costs that may be specific to your conference and should be included in your budget are: GSA staff on-site expenses, additional insurance needs based on types of transportation needed and internet or other meeting related expenses. If you need additional information on budgeting please contact Becky Sundeen ([bsundeen@geosociety.org](mailto:bsundeen@geosociety.org)).

May 1981; Revised May 1984, October 27, 1987, November 6, 1995, October 25, 1999, and April 25, 2001, May 8, 2002, September 3, 2002, November 7, 2002, 31 December 2008. (peng05)

## **SUGGESTIONS TO CONVENERS**

The first Penrose Conference was held in 1969. Since that time many conferences have been held, most of them very successfully and some...not so successfully. A body of experience has accumulated about the dynamics of holding a conference.

Penrose Conferences are not intended to be miniature GSA symposia. They are more in the nature of seminars, and many teachers observe that organizing a good seminar is as difficult as...and perhaps more difficult than...preparing a lecture. The following suggestions have been distilled from the letters and reports of past conveners and questionnaires returned by participants of previous Penrose Conferences. They are offered with the hope that future conveners may find them useful and are not intended as rigid guidelines.

It is implicit that the conveners have thoroughly read and understand the Penrose Conference General Rules and Guidelines. If the co-sponsor has guidelines, and if they are available, a copy should be submitted with the proposal. It is the responsibility of the conveners to check those guidelines for compatibility with the GSA rules and guidelines.

### **Before the Conference**

In cooperation with the professional meeting coordinator (PMC), conveners should select and arrange for the meeting site. *Contract negotiations with vendors should be conducted only by the PMC and not by conveners.* Vendors must not receive conflicting information from multiple sources about the plans and requirements for the conference, and they must not become confused about who has final authority over conference logistics. Also, the PMC brings professional expertise to the negotiation process that a convener is unlikely to duplicate. Throughout the planning and running of the conference, it is vital that conveners remain in close communication with the PMC and that conveners understand how conference responsibilities are divided between them and the PMC.

The selection of participants is critical to any Penrose Conference and to a significant degree predetermines its chances for success. Letters to participants should explicitly state that acceptance of the invitation signifies an intent to stay through the entire meeting, including field trips if offered. Multinational participation enhances some conferences and is essential for others.

The conveners of each Penrose Conference have the option, if they desire, to publish the proceedings of the conference, including abstracts as appropriate, with the first right of refusal of this publication to be given to GSA. If the convener plans to publish from the inception, meeting participants must be notified whether or not proceedings or abstracts will be published.

Conveners should aggressively pursue opportunities for support of foreign travel from institutions other than GSA. Conveners should plan for the participation of graduate students who can contribute to and benefit from the conference. Most are glad to assist with chores such as running errands, projectors, etc., in exchange for a reduced registration fee.

Conveners should contact their key speakers well in advance of the conference. It is important to get commitments from these people as early as possible. Although most of us are eager to present the results of our own latest research, it is helpful if someone is designated to stand back and give instead an overview of the field. The conveners may or may not choose to do this themselves. If they ask one or more of their key speakers to present a review, it is appropriate for them to suggest an outline of the major issues to be discussed.

Applicants should be made to understand that not everyone attending a Penrose Conference is expected to give a paper. Contributions made by presenting posters or simply by taking part in the discussions are at least as valuable.

In planning a Penrose Conference, care must be taken not to overstructure the meeting. Many past conveners have found it wise to schedule no more than two formal sessions per day. Afternoon or evening meetings may be reserved for discussion alone without presentation of papers. If evening meetings are scheduled, plan on ending them by 10:00 p.m. Fatigue and lack of time for discussions are the most commonly heard complaints about Penrose Conferences, and many participants welcome a half day or an evening off.

It is impossible to recommend a format appropriate for every Penrose Conference. The range in subject matter is too great: some topics are best treated by panel discussions; others are best covered by a succession of speakers. If necessary, conveners may modify the format in mid-course. But whatever the format, the emphasis at a Penrose Conference is on discussion and not on presentation as at conventions. Some past conveners have scheduled half or even more of the time for periods of discussion.

Mount posters in a separate room, such as the hospitality room, and designate times to examine them. Try to make the poster sessions as informal as possible. Generally the number of posters exceeds the capacity of the walls, and they have to be changed during the meeting. It is wise to have extra tape or pins on hand. Check with the innkeeper beforehand about the availability of wall space.

Participants of Penrose Conferences should be encouraged to bring pre-prints and reprints for display in a meeting room. A helpful device at some conferences has been to have participants list one or two of their papers germane to the topic of the conference.

This provides a useful and up-to-date bibliography which, if desired, may be requested and mailed to participants in advance of the conference.

In scheduling field trips, consider the optimum time: pre-meeting to set the stage for later discussions, or during the meeting to consolidate particular points already introduced. Plan to start early in the day, so that participants can return to the conference site at a reasonable hour. Food-service people do not appreciate unscheduled late arrivals, especially of large groups. Field trips during the meeting may provide a welcome break from days in a meeting room, but field trips following a meeting often are not well-attended, as participants may feel "saturated" and anxious to be on their way. Optional field trips should be discouraged, but if field trips are scheduled, all should be expected to participate.

### *Starting the Conference*

Before the overview of the subject is presented, conveners should state the ground rules of the conference, including intent to publish.

Penrose Conferences are informal. Long introductions before presentations and applause after them are out of place.

The conveners should remind participants that material presented at a Penrose Conference is confidential unless conveners have made it clear to participants that proceedings will be published. Reference, quotation, or reproduction in any form is allowed only with the permission of the author. Notes may be taken, but cameras and recording devices are not to be used in the meeting rooms or at poster sessions. Proprietary data should not be left unattended.

Some Penrose Conferences have dealt with subject matter much in the public eye, and therefore, the press has been interested. To keep a spirit of lively, informal discussion, direct participation by the press is not permitted.

### *During the Conference*

Encourage the speakers to stick with the theme of the conference. Individual reports of research accomplished may be appropriate, but they are not the primary purpose of a Penrose Conference. Speakers should be made to stay within their allotments of time. Penrose Conferences are supposed to be informal with discussions and presentations blended, and scheduling need not be as tight as at conventions, but nevertheless, control is necessary.

The job of chairing a Penrose session is difficult, calling for a few of the arts of a cheerleader and many of the talents of a sergeant major. The chairman of a session will need a timer and must be prepared to stop speakers, for long-winded presentations drastically shorten the time for discussions. Debate when stimulating should be permitted to continue, but not to the extent of totally eliminating the time of a later speaker. The chairman has the difficult task of encouraging free-wheeling debate and still maintaining some semblance of order and a schedule. Robert F. Legget's chapter on "The Gentle Art of Chairmanship" in his book, *Committees, A Working Guide*, directly applies to conferences if the word "session" is substituted for "committee."

Many past conveners and participants have suggested a format of five-minute papers with only one or two slides, followed by a period of structured discussion. Certainly, long presentations of data are more appropriate for posters. Time at the podium is better used for presenting outrageous ideas, contrary views, or perceptive insights, depending upon the point of view.

At every meeting there will be some participants, who have brought a few slides and would like a few moments to present their data. Conveners should beware, for in the past many of these impromptu papers have gone on for inordinate amounts of time. Before the presentation, if allowed at all, agreement should be reached about the time required, and the contract should be honored.

It may be necessary for conveners or a timekeeper to end a discussion before all have made their point. For those who are interested, an extra discussion period may be scheduled for one of the break periods. Normally, however, breaks should be honored as important parts of the meeting.

### **Ending the Conference**

Almost all conferences have used a synthesizer to summarize the results of the meeting. The summary should acknowledge divergent as well as convergent opinions. If different disciplines are present, it may be helpful to have multiple syntheses, yet the presentations and discussions should be attended by all. Even here, time should be allowed for comments on the summing up.

Many Penrose Conferences have resulted in symposia at section and annual GSA meetings, which provide a useful vehicle for presenting the results to the larger geologic community.

All participants should be given a list of addresses of their fellow participants. The contacts made at Penrose Conferences are one of the best things about them!!

\* \* \* \* \*

Revised May 10, 1997; April 25, 2001; June 11, 2001; September 3, 2002, 31 December 2008 (pen03)

**THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA**  
**GENERAL RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS WAIVER**  
(Including use of Alcohol and Illegal Drugs)

I, the undersigned, having been fully advised as to the nature and possible dangers and hazards of a field trip held in connection with the GSA Penrose Conference \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(date) \_\_\_\_\_, I do hereby assume any and all risks involved in connection with the field trip and do hereby save and hold harmless THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA and the conference conveners and fieldtrip leaders from any and all claims, losses, and damages, (including attorney's fees and any cost involved because of said claims) on account of injury, death, property damage, inconvenience, or loss of money due to delay that may arise, by reason of my participation in the field trip. I understand that my use of alcohol or drugs would impair my judgment and coordination, and will hold the Society harmless from claims arising from the use of either. I understand that I am responsible for carrying my own life, medical, and liability insurance.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:  
Geological Society of America  
Attn: Meetings Department | Becky Sundeen  
3300 Penrose Place, P.O. Box 9140  
Boulder, CO 80301  
Phone: 303-357-1041 | Fax: 303-357-1072  
Email: bsundeen@geosociety.org

## **CO-SPONSORSHIP OF PENROSE CONFERENCES**

As of 30 December 2008

1. GSA is the principal sponsor of Penrose Conferences; however, other societies, organizations, and institutions are welcomed as co-sponsors.
2. The Committee on Penrose Conferences reserves the right to approve co-sponsors at the time the proposal is considered.
3. Co-sponsorship is usually in name only—not operational. All budgetary and non-program planning and execution are handled through a professional meeting coordinator (PMC). For conferences outside of the U.S.A., the PMC generally will collaborate with a local coordinator at the meeting site.

There is nothing that prohibits co-sponsors from providing financial support that will lower participant costs. Recognition is given to co-sponsors in the conference announcements, as well as during the conference.

4. If the co-sponsor has guidelines, and if they are available, a copy should be submitted with the proposal. It is the responsibility of the conveners to check those guidelines for compatibility with the GSA rules and guidelines.
5. The Society accepts fiscal responsibility for a conference. Any surplus funds generated by the meeting must be returned to the GSA Foundation and meeting co-sponsors.
6. At the conclusion of the conference, a written financial report must be prepared by the professional meeting coordinator and submitted to the Chief Executive Officer.

\* \* \* \* \*

***PENROSE CONFERENCE PROPOSAL***  
**Cover Sheet**

This cover sheet should be returned with your Penrose Conference proposal.

**CO-CONVENERS** (Please designate GSA Members. Attach additional page if needed.)

1. Name  
Address

Telephone  
Fax  
E-mail

2. Name  
Address

Telephone  
Fax  
E-mail

3. Name  
Address

Telephone  
Fax  
E-mail

**TITLE and SUBJECT of PROPOSAL**

**ANTICIPATED NUMBER of PARTICIPANTS** \_\_\_\_\_

**IDENTIFICATION of CO-SPONSORS (if any)**

***PENROSE CONFERENCE PROPOSAL***

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

This table of contents should be returned with your Penrose Conference proposal. Please number your proposal pages and enter the appropriate page number for each category.

**Description of Subject and Objectives**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Date, Location and Size of Conference**

(Include justification if necessary)

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Preliminary List of Key Speakers**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Preliminary Outline of Sessions**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of the Nature and Logistics of Field Trips**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Anticipated International Participants and  
Source of Financial Support**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration of Willingness of Conveners to  
Abide by the Penrose Conference General  
Rules and Guidelines**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**For Conferences Outside of the U.S.A. Only:  
Will GSA's Professional Meetings Coordinator  
Manage Conference Alone or Collaborate with  
a Local Coordinator?**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

**Curriculum Vitae for each Convener (Please attach)**

Page \_\_\_\_\_

*Penrose Conference Convener Letter of Agreement*

I agree that as a convener of a GSA Penrose Conference that I will not enter into any agreements with editors or publishers regarding publication of abstracts, articles or monographs related to the topic of the Penrose Conference I have convened until GSA has had first right of refusal for such publication(s).

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Name

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Date

To be signed by each convener and returned to the GSA Executive Director if the Penrose Conference is accepted.