

DC Trip Info Session 2024_Q+A

Q & A: DC Trip Info Session

Please write your live questions below, and we will try to answer them in a timely manner. Feel free to ask anonymously or include your name, primary experiment(s), and institute. Please also feel free to raise your hand during the Q&A session at the end of the meeting.

1. Craig Group: I think the president's budget is expected to be late this year. I heard they expect it in late spring. April/May/June? Source: HEPAP meeting
Kelly Stifter: Yes, and this may or may not impact when we schedule the trip. We get guidance on trip dates from a consulting firm (Lewis-Burke Associates), and fold the budget timeline into that decision. That's also why we won't know the trip dates until ~January, since we try to be responsive to any changes up to that point.
→ Thank you Kelly 👍
2. Craig again: I've had luck with meeting my local house representative in person. He even came and toured my lab once. One time I bumped into him on Amtrak a few years later on the way back from DC, and we had a nice conversation.
 - a. Kiley: This is great! This is the kind of connection we would like to keep track of in WHIPS, since you are more likely to get a meeting with / leave a positive impression on this legislator's office than someone else not connected with the district might
3. I'm definitely interested in volunteering for the trip, but I am applying for PhD programs this fall, and I may end up having grad school visits around March / April which could conflict with the trip dates. When will we need to definitively commit to attending? (I assume the interest form is not binding.)
 - a. Kelly Stifter: The interest form is absolutely not binding. We haven't decided the trip dates yet, but we will aim to do so in mid-January. We will ask for firm commitments 1-2 weeks after the final date announcement (so by late January). If it turns out that you can't go this year, that's ok! This is an annual event, so you could attend in a future year. If you give us your email address via the interest form and end up not being able to go this year, we're likely to still use the same list to advertise for next year, so you'll still be kept in the loop.
4. How much experience do we need in policy and advocacy (whether filling out the interest form or just generally for the trip)?
 - a. Kelly Stifter: No experience is necessary! The trainings that are provided ahead of time should teach you everything you need to know (but we also encourage a lot of practice). That said, previous experience is always useful! Which is why we ask about it on the interest form. We strive to build a team that is diverse along many axes - scientific background, career stage, experience level with the trip, etc.

- b. River Robles: Wanted to affirm what Kelly said - I had no experience with policy or science advocacy before attending the trip and found the reference materials and veteran advocates sufficient to get up to speed.