TOS Meetings: Forefront Format and Partners

When The Oceanography Society (TOS) was conceived and made a reality one major purpose desired by the members was for TOS to have a meeting outlet for the oceanographic community that provided significant presentations of timely subjects impacting our entire field (scientific, industrial, policy and educational). In addition, the members wanted the society to ensure that the shorter presentations would be provided and discussed in a setting that is conducive to an open and even lengthy discussion, and that time was available to hold side meetings and workshops on special topics. These desires by its members led TOS to a unique, member-inspired meeting format of having plenary sessions with 30-minute talks, with no co-occurring sessions, and significant poster sessions and workshops at a different time, where the presenters have the opportunity to discuss unhurriedly their thoughts and ideas with colleagues and many leaders in the field, including policy, industrial and educational attendees. In addition, various sponsors and programs make requests for holding special topical sessions and workshops to the Program Committee for that TOS meeting, and if appropriate they are invited.

In 2001 TOS teamed up with Oceanology International Americas (OIA) to sponsor an exhibition and conference in Miami, Florida. The TOS Council believed this teaming could provide substantial benefits to its members and the entire ocean community. This was a correct assessment and the meeting exceeded expectations of OIA and TOS and was a tremendous success. With this success the TOS Council entered into an agreement with OIA for the 2003 OIA/TOS Exhibition and Conference to be held in New Orleans on June 4–6, 2003. TOS is responsible for the conference element and OIA the exhibition and the planning. TOS will maintain the format as given above including plenary sessions, posters and special topical sessions and workshops. Abstracts will be published in an issue of the TOS magazine specifically for this conference. There will be no registration fee for the OIA/TOS Exhibition and Conference. Overall, this teaming is providing TOS members and the entire ocean community more opportunities than have been possible with other society meetings. Mark your calendar and make plans to attend this conference. Encourage and support your students to become involved in TOS and attend the conference.

Over the years many comments have been given to TOS about its format, in particular about having so many posters and not enough presentations. At the same time it is nearly unanimous that all very much like the non-concurrent sessions and the longer, significant presentations. The TOS Council has continued to examine the meeting format and consistently validated the format as the one most appropriate to meet the needs of the society. Other society’s formats have numerous, concurrent sessions with short presenta-

(views expressed in this column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Naval Research Laboratory.)