

Columbia Neuroscience Seminar series Core Values and Committee Participation Guidelines

The Columbia Neuroscience Seminars (CNS) series is a collection of invited talks by national and international researchers in the field of neuroscience. Speakers represent a range of research institutions and career stages, who are recognized experts in their field or who have demonstrated future promise for outstanding research. A major goal of this seminar series is to expose graduate students, postdoctoral and junior researchers to high-quality science and to stimulate scientific discourse.

The CNS speakers are chosen by a selection committee composed of over twenty members that are faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students from across Columbia's campuses. The committee solicits nominations for speakers broadly from the Columbia community before inviting speakers whose work represents various fields and techniques in Neuroscience. The committee encourages representation among selected speakers of gender, gender identity and expression, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, nationality, disabilities, and does not accept discrimination based on any of those aspects.

The Selection Committee and administrative staff abide by core values that guide our participation in the CNS series (listed below). We strive to uphold these core values and guidelines in the following aspects of our work: i) the interactions we have via email and when we meet (both in-person and virtually); ii) the speakers' selection process; iii) the process of design and production of the CNS series.

These participation guidelines are not intended to be an exhaustive list of parameters but rather to give a snapshot of how we strive to interact in our shared spaces. Guidelines may be updated periodically and we welcome suggestions of additional items that you would like to see represented here. If you have any thoughts or concerns about these core values and value-driven behavioral guidelines, whether you are part of the CNS Selection Committee or a participant of the series as a speaker or as a member of the audience, you are encouraged to get in touch with Chiara Bertipaglia (cb3249@columbia.edu) or Natalie Trotta (nt2510@columbia.edu).

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Transparency – We operate through transparent processes

- Guided by our values and participation guidelines, we set clear expectations for the speaker selection process through a rubric to screen nominations. Values, guidelines, and rubric are published on the CNS website page to hold us accountable.
- During the selection process, when making a case for a particular speaker, we elaborate on the values we are considering by providing clear explanations to committee members regarding why a person's work embodies "good science" and/or they are a "good scientist".
- Each year, we define what our benchmarks are for selecting speakers, and we critically analyze if we meet them. We then commit to sharing this information with the rest of the community by publishing it on the CNS website.

Good Science – We celebrate excellence in scientific research and academic conduct

A major goal of this seminar series is to expose trainees to outstanding science done by excellent scientists. We believe that outstanding science includes significant advances in our knowledge base and technical innovations that facilitate new discoveries. Furthermore, we believe that outstanding science can be accomplished at all career stages. Additionally, in this seminar series, we also promote scientists who embody and advocate for best practices in the academic research enterprise (such as good mentorship, commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, champions of open science and team science). To achieve this goal, we take the following steps:

- We nominate and select scientists from a variety of scientific and technical disciplines in neuroscience and closely related fields.
- We make an effort to nominate and select established scientists as well as early-career scientists.
- We do our research to nominate and select speakers with a reputation for promoting good practices in academic research.

Mutual Respect – We welcome a variety of opinions in the Selection Committee

We uphold an environment of mutual respect by ensuring that all voices are heard because all perspectives are worth listening to. We do so by:

- Asking every committee member what is important for them when it comes to the speakers' selection.
- Acknowledging the validity of other people's opinions when there is disagreement, and being responsive to constructive feedback and prepared to learn from everyone. When we make mistakes, we acknowledge them openly and revise our behaviors.

Diversity – We strive to amplify a diversity of voices in science

We commit to featuring a representation of different voices in the seminars. Diversity of speakers includes, but is not limited to, their type of institution, topic, areas/technology/technique/tool/animal model, as well as aspects of the speakers' identity such as race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. To achieve this goal, some of the steps we take in the CNS Selection Committee are described below:

- Every member of our committee has the right to have their identity respected. We are dedicated to providing a positive experience for everyone, regardless of age, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, ethnicity, nationality, race, or religion (or lack thereof), career stage.
- We proactively invite folks who represent a diversity of voices to self-nominate to be part of this committee. We strive to include a fair representation of diverse voices in our membership including, but not limited to, career stage, neuroscience field, and animal models, race and ethnicity, gender identity and expression.
- We make an effort to nominate and select speakers that represent Neuroscience in diverse ways, asking ourselves “what voices should we hear more from because they have not been featured in the past?”. We stay updated on data regarding the representation of scientists in Neuroscience so we know what benchmarks to hit or exceed within our own speaker list. We research the background of nominees and consult national and international speakers lists that feature voices that are historically excluded and marginalized in science. We educate ourselves on backgrounds that are different from our own.

Inclusion and Accessibility – We strive to engage in inclusive dialogue

Within the CNS Selection Committee

- We follow best practices to make the CNS Selection Committee meetings inclusive and accessible. We achieve this goal by:
 - holding them virtually through Zoom, with closed captions, considering that participants are located in different Columbia University campuses. If participants agree, we record them to allow viewing at a later time for those who cannot participate synchronously;
 - allowing multiple ways for people to participate (chat, Google docs, unmute function, having the camera on or off); allowing those who cannot participate synchronously to view and edit meeting minutes and materials after the meeting happened;
 - checking with committee members that the current meetings are inclusive for them and meet their mission;
 - addressing people respecting the pronouns that they use. We encourage people to volunteer pronouns rather than requesting. Those that are comfortable can model so by introducing themselves with their pronouns in use, as well as by including them in the Zoom name and email signature.
- Everyone’s voice is important in our interactions within the Selection Committee. We commit to making this space a safer one for constructive discussion. We achieve this goal by:
 - Asking ourselves about the perspectives that we may be missing in our conversations;
 - Making sure that all committee members are heard by making space for, proactively inviting, and equally considering the opinion of junior committee members if they haven’t had the chance to express their thoughts yet and/or if they need particular encouragement to share;
 - Actively listening to and considering others’ perspectives, while assuming good intentions and asking for clarification where there is doubt;
 - Taking space to share our thoughts without fear of saying the wrong thing;

- Making sure people's interventions are heard - not talking over people's voices or repeating their words without giving credit.

Seminars design and execution

- We follow best practices to make all the CNS seminars accessible to a diverse audience, both in-person and in virtual settings. We achieve this goal by:
 - providing live streaming options;
 - providing closed captioning service;
 - providing hearing assistance;
 - making a recording of the talk available to view at a later time (if speakers allow).
- We will continue to offer a hybrid (with virtual and in-person components) model of meetings and seminars, even when the COVID19 pandemic-related restrictions of in-person events will end

Equity and amplification – We use our power and privilege to ensure that all voices are heard

We regularly ask ourselves what power imbalances might exist in our dialogues – both within the CNS Selection Committee interactions and during the seminar events – and commit to take action to level them and/or address any negative impacts on others, according to the power one holds. In particular:

- We commit to creating an environment in the CNS Selection Committee where trainees and junior faculty feel comfortable speaking up and disagreeing with more senior committee members. To achieve this goal we:
 - Encourage trainees to have separate meetings in which they work through their own decision process and then report back to the rest of the committee;
 - Reserve three speakers in the speakers lineup to be selected exclusively by the trainees of the Selection Committee;
 - Encourage historically marginalized members (underrepresented folks, women and gender minorities, trainees, junior career folks) to share their thoughts first, and we speak up for them in situations of microaggressions and/or power abuse.
- We proactively make space for trainees and junior researchers to ask questions and network with the speakers. We do so by:
 - Reserving the role of seminar moderator to a graduate student or postdoctoral researcher;
 - Instructing the seminar moderator to select questions from these voices, or allow anonymous questions (in virtual settings);
 - Structuring the speaker's visit with opportunities for interactions with trainees (trainee coffee chat and post-seminar mingling session).