**What is Late Night Science?**

Late Night Science is a speaker series that invites the public to hear researchers talk about their work and tour their laboratories. The goal of the series to make science transparent and interesting to members of the community who live and work alongside scientists and support science with their tax dollars, who would otherwise interact with science mostly through the media. Our attendees have ranged from high school students to senior citizens, families with children, science writers, and members of local government.

**About the Talk:**

Ideal Late Night Science talks are an accessible, interactive introduction to the presenter’s field and research. Researchers do not need to present extensive data, so even first year students can present! Our talks run 20-30 minutes, with additional time for questions.

Below is one suggested structure, with a suggested # of slides for each topic:

* General background on the topic you study 1-3
* Why this topic generally is important for humans 1-4
* A bit about your own research including methods 1-4
* Why your work specifically is important to humans 1-4
* Take-home points 1-2

Please see the Presenter Tips document for more details on crafting a good talk.

**About the Tour:**

Lab tours are a chance for attendees to see what happens in a real laboratory. Ideally a tour will have 2-3 stations, and the audience will split into groups to rotate between the stations. Some examples of good stations include showing off specialized equipment or viewing slides through a microscope. Tours should adhere to all regulatory guidelines (e.g. no vertebrates, no pictures unless express permission is given by the lab head). If the presenter does not do bench research, they may choose to design demonstrations or activities instead of planning a tour.

Please see the Presenter Tips document for more details on crafting a good tour.

**Setting Up An Event:**

1. **Recruit a Speaker:** Use grad student / postdoc / program listservs to advertise the series and find people interested in presenting. Ask those interested to get their PI’s approval to hold the event and commit to a particular month, and send them the list of presenter tips.
2. **Book a Date/Room**
   1. Double check that the presenter has the lab head’s approval.
   2. Ask the presenter to select the date- for best results, make sure they pick a weeknight that isn’t a holiday!
   3. Ask the presenter to book a conference room near the lab.
   4. If the building has security, find out the protocol for admitting guests. Often they may request a guest list and/or for all guests to sign in with photo ID.
3. **Set Up Event Page:** Set up a website with all of the event information (what is it, date, time, location, title, schedule, directions, etc) and the ability to collect RSVPs (we use EventBrite, which is free for free events). Collecting RSVPs will let you know how many people are interested and provide a list for security, while also giving you a chance to contact your guests with reminders and info on future events. Run the description past the presenter to make sure all details are correct before enabling ticket sales.
4. **Advertise:** Look for university, community, and school listservs. Email anyone who came to your last event. Collect emails of people who want to be regularly updated about LNS.
5. **Meet with Speaker:** Arrange to meet with the speaker about a week before the event to go over their presentation and plan for the lab tour or demo. This makes sure they’ve worked on the presentation ahead of time and allows you to offer input to ensure their slides are appropriate in level, length, and scope for the audience. At this meeting, make sure the lab tour makes sense and the presenter has recruited enough helpers to handle your guests (or plan to recruit extra volunteers).
6. **Recruit Volunteers:** Find volunteers to help communicate with security, pick up snacks, man the door, and help with the lab tour as necessary.
7. **Host the Event!** 
   1. **Day-of Setup:** Email security with the full RSVP list. Email guests a reminder of the event. If you have a source of funding, buy snacks!
   2. **Immediately Before the Event:** Put up signs directing guests from the entrance to the room. Post a volunteer at the front door to greet and direct guests as they arrive, and to make security happier. Set out snacks and greet everyone.
   3. **Beginning the Event:** Start off by introducing yourself, the presenter, and the purpose of the series. For small enough crowds, you can actually ask each person to quickly introduce themselves and why they came (something as short as “I like science” or “I get extra credit”) to get a feel for your audience.
   4. **During the Talk:** During the talk, chime in with clarifying questions as appropriate (e.g. “Can you remind us what a control experiment means?”) and snap a few photos to send to the presenter and use in advertising. Don’t use photos with any audience member’s faces without permission!
   5. **During the Tour:** Break the audience into groups for the different stations and prompt the groups to rotate approximately every 10m. Take more photos if possible!
   6. **Concluding:** Make sure everyone has safely left the facility. Clean up any snacks or other messes.
8. **Wrap Up:** Thank the speaker, send them a few pics, and ask if they are willing to provide a copy of their slides. Save the presentation and pictures for future reference/use. If you purchased any supplies and have funding, make sure the receipts are properly documented for reimbursement.

[Presenter Tip Guide](https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B8jAToIzpA2GRk5ZYVc0TExZRnM)

**About Late Night Science**

Anita Burgos founded Late Night Science in 2014 as part of Columbia University Neuroscience Outreach. Ali Kaufman and Laura Long have been running the program since 2017.

For more information, see the below resources:

* [Late Night Science on the CUNO website](http://www.columbia.edu/~srb2201/late_night_science.html)
* [Our EventBrite, where you can browse previous and upcoming events](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/columbia-university-neuroscience-outreach-cuno-6491729221)
* Blog / Newsletter Coverage: [1](https://danablog.org/tag/late-night-science-talk/) [2](https://you.columbia.edu/stories/late-night-science/) [3](http://newsroom.cumc.columbia.edu/blog/2017/11/14/late-night-science-brings-public-cumc-labs/)