



ASPET 2023 is a meeting that will be designed by our members for our members! Starting in February of 2021, ASPET hired a meeting strategy consultant to engage our members in focus groups, personal interviews, and online surveys to help design the new 2023 ASPET Annual Meeting. Over 700 members provided valuable input. Venue and date selection, meeting formats, and social events have been designed with information collected directly from our members.

How the Venue Was Selected

Research Conclusion:

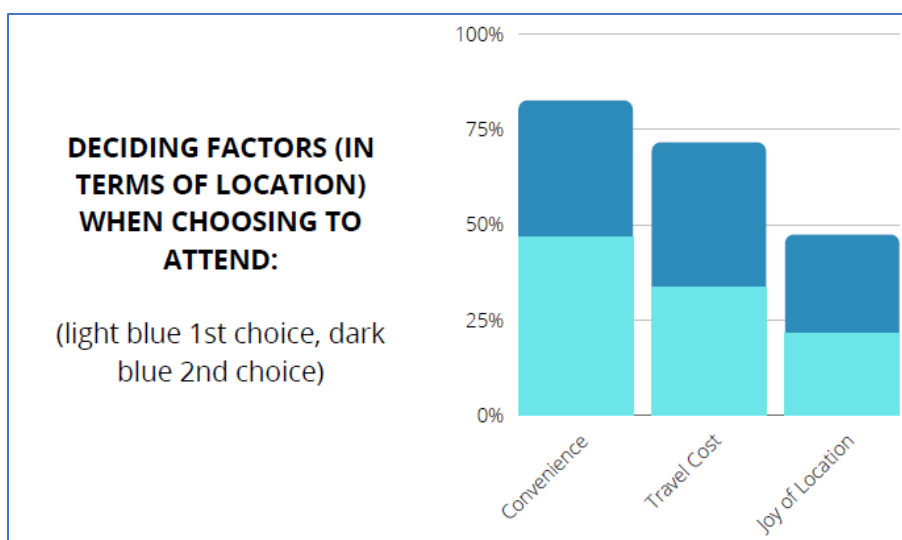
Members prefer the ASPET Annual Meeting to be schedule in late April, May, or early June

ASPET Action:

When looking for a venue, we avoided dates that would conflict with Easter, Passover, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and the meetings of our former Experimental Biology partners. This ruled out all of April. We established a preference for May dates in order to allow the maximum time in between ASPET's new independent meeting and the re-scheduled World Congress on Pharmacology in early July.

Research Conclusion:

When choosing what meetings to attend, the primary deciding factor for our members was first the location's Convenience, followed closely by affordable Travel Costs. For almost half of the respondents, the Joy of the location was also an important factor.



ASPET Action:

We created heat maps to see where the bulk of our members and meeting attendees are located. This helped us see what the attendees might consider a convenient location. We requested proposals from 69 potential venues in 23 cities. The cities were selected based on the *convenience* provided by having a major airport that is considered a hub and for being within driving distance to the largest bulk of our membership and meeting attendees. The venues within these cities were chosen if they could physically fit our new meeting.

ASPET received 43 proposals to host our 2023 annual meeting. Council and staff narrowed this down to five finalists. These decisions were based on:

- 1) **Acceptable meeting dates**
Some of the proposals included dates that did not fit our parameters described above. For example, some overlapped with holidays.
- 2) **Preferred meeting dates**
During the review process ASPET established a preference for dates that fell fully over a weekend in order to minimize time away from the classroom for our educators and students. This did not automatically eliminate a proposal, but it dropped them to a lower priority.
- 3) **Hotel room rates for attendees**
Some proposals had hotel room rates higher than our highest EB room rates. The consultant's research showed our members wanted affordable travel costs. Separating from the larger EB meeting should (and did) open up more attractive rate options for ASPET.
- 4) **Overall travel costs for attendees**
We calculated average flight costs per USDOT reports, the proposed hotel room costs, and roundtrip taxi fare from airport and ranked each proposal from highest to lowest travel costs.
- 5) **Costs to ASPET**
We compared catering costs for our most purchased food and beverage items as well as labor rates, applicable local sales taxes, and administrative surcharges for each proposal and ranked them from highest to lowest cost to ASPET.
- 6) **Inappropriately sized meeting space**
Some proposals included meeting and poster rooms that were too small for our needs.
- 7) **Poor meeting space flow**
Some proposals included meeting space that was inconveniently spread out over multiple buildings and/or floors. While this did not automatically eliminate a proposal, it dropped it to a lower priority.

The 5 finalists were further scrutinized and ranked based on:

- 1) Number of daily flights into the city's airport
- 2) Whether or not the city's airport had non-stop flights to cities with large amounts of ASPET members
- 3) Which international cities had non-stop flights into the city's airport
- 4) Number of ASPET members within a 5-hour drive of the location
- 5) Travel costs for ASPET members
- 6) Catering costs for ASPET
- 7) Whether the proposed meeting space was a good fit allowing for growth and flexibility
- 8) Whether the proposed meeting space had a good flow of meeting rooms in relation to each other

After extensive analysis on the two most important factors as identified by the consultant's research - *Convenience* and *Travel Costs*, we then looked at the *Joy* of the location to help further differentiate close candidates. For this subjective analysis, we researched tourist attractions near the hotel. We looked for the variety of attractions to include art, music, sports, museums, history, science centers, outdoor activities, classic and unique attractions, breweries/bars/nightlife, etc.

Results:



The ASPET Council unanimously voted to approve **St. Louis Union Station** for the ASPET Annual Meeting which will be held from **Thursday, May 18 to Sunday, May 21, 2023**.

What to Expect from the ASPET 2023 Annual Meeting

ASPET meetings will:

- **Be inclusive** to all participants and represent a diversity of voices.
- **Connect** people and topics across the field of pharmacology throughout the year.
- Present content that represents **excellence in science**, that is **interdisciplinary** and translational, and of value to our divisions.
- Ensure that the home of pharmacology is a place of **innovation**.
- Deliver **valuable experiences** that sustain the growth and success of ASPET.

A Shorter Meeting

Our meeting strategy consultant learned that members across all ages, divisions, and employment types, strongly prefer a shorter meeting than the current EB format that often requires a 5-night stay at the hotel if you want to attend everything. Reducing the meeting length will also help to reduce member travel costs as well as time away from the lab.

The 2023 annual meeting will start on a Thursday afternoon allowing many members to fly/drive in that morning. We will then have 2 full days of programming before ending with a closing lunch event on Sunday allowing members to fly/drive home that afternoon. This translates to 3 nights of hotel costs if you attend the full main program.

Exploring the City

For those who want to come early or stay late, you can expect optional networking opportunities such as ASPET community service projects, group tours of local attractions, and if available, educational tours of local labs/innovation centers. These types of activities create lasting memories as you get to know your fellow pharmacologists better. Additionally, you can expect to attend a social event for all attendees at a unique location on one of the main meeting nights.

Pharmacology Programming

You can expect a more flexible and curated approach to session selection. You can expect to hear from a diversity of voices. You can expect a daily keynote presentation that will become the focal point of conversations that day. You can expect concurrent sessions that are shorter in length with new session formats that include interactive, hands-on elements to engage diverse learning modes and deliver more information in an effective way. You can expect a variety of topics covering the breadth of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics that are more cohesive so you can attend talks in different division areas that transcend a specific division and inspire your own work. You can expect more breathing space between sessions to absorb and discuss what you learned. You can expect virtual components of the meeting for fuller engagement before, during, and after the meeting.

Pharmacology Posters

You can expect receptions with posters presentations every evening. You can expect a student-postdoc poster competition that highlights excellent science daily.

Awards

You can expect award lectures more broadly available to the membership through a VIP webinar series leading up to the meeting. You can expect to intermingle with these award-winning scientists during the in-person meeting. You can expect an awards luncheon to close out the meeting where we can celebrate both the established scientists winning our scientific achievement awards and our newest young scientist poster award winners.