

## Discoveries in the Making: Writing Guidelines

- **Sign-Up:** Writers will use Volunteer Spot to sign up for the date that works best for their schedules. All writers will receive an email with a Volunteer Spot link when a new date is added.
- **Assignment:** Each writer covers one presenter, and there are two presenters per night, so we need two writers per night.
  - Remember that there is a waiting list of writers, so if you are unable to keep your date, either use the swap tool within Volunteer Spot to switch with another writer or simply “delete” your spot. (Deleting a spot does not delete the entire opportunity; it only removes your name from that date’s sign-up spot.)
- **Goal:** Your goal as a Discoveries in the Making writer is to describe each speaker’s research for a lay audience in a way that is interesting and engaging to the reader. Check out these resources and models to get started:
  - How to write a science feature: <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/apr/10/write-science-feature-welcome-trust-writing-prize>
  - How to write a good research blog post: <http://scienceofblogging.com/how-to-write-a-good-research-blog-post/>
  - A good model from UAB Mix: <https://www.uab.edu/mix/stories/how-my-driving>
  - Another model from UAB Mix: <https://www.uab.edu/mix/stories/levy-gene-mastermind>
- **Photos:** Take at least one quality photo of your assigned speaker. (Cell phone photos are fine.) The photo(s) can be taken before, during, or after the event. You may choose to take a posed photo of the speaker and/or snapshots while the speaker is presenting their research or talking to the public before or afterward. Make the file name(s) include the name of the speaker.
- **Video:** You may also shoot video (again, cell phone video is fine; just make sure you turn your phone on its side to shoot in landscape mode). Videos should be no longer than 4 minutes.
- **Post length & format:** Your post should be 500-600 words, submitted as a Word document or Google Doc with no special formatting. (Your post will be copied and pasted as plain text, which means it will lose any special formatting.) Do not use tabs at the beginning of new paragraphs; instead, put a return between each paragraph.
- **Links:** If your post contains links, do not embed hyperlinks within the text. Instead, put the full URL in parentheses beside the word(s) that should be hyperlinked.
- **Submission:** You must email your post to the speaker (copying Julie) within 4 days of the event (see Page 2). If changes are needed, you must email your final draft to Julie within 7 days of the event. When you are ready to submit, email the Word doc and the JPG photo(s) to [juliemck@uab.edu](mailto:juliemck@uab.edu). Julie McKinney will publish your post and photos with your byline and photo credit(s) on the Graduate School blog: <http://www.uab.edu/graduate/news-and-events>

## Discoveries in the Making: Blog Draft Sample Email

You are responsible for sending a draft of your blog post via email to the speaker about whose presentation you wrote within 4 days of the event you covered. Copy Julie McKinney – [juliemck@uab.edu](mailto:juliemck@uab.edu) – on your email to the speaker. Below is an example of what you should send (with your blog post attached).

Hi [Name],

I have attached my blog post about your Discoveries in the Making talk on [Date]. Could you check the article for factual accuracy before we publish it? Because the story must be a certain length, please do not rewrite text or add to the current word count if you have corrections. Feel free to send any necessary corrections using Word's track-changes feature.

Please reply-all (making sure that Julie McKinney – [juliemck@uab.edu](mailto:juliemck@uab.edu) – is in the CC line) within three days to let me know if there are any factual corrections needed.