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The BSPC Card System

This year (like the previous five years), we will be using the card system for calling on people during the BSPC sessions. The main purpose of the card system is to ensure that every participant has an equal chance to be called on during Q&A over the three days of the conference. The system has proved to be extremely effective at leveling the playing field, so that factors such as seniority, gender, aggressiveness, etc., do not play a role in determining who gets to talk the most during Q&A.

Here's how the card system works. Each conference participant will receive five color-coded, single-use "question cards" with her or his name on them. Chairs of sessions will use the ranking of the cards to determine who to call on next. (In the case of a tie, the chair will have to use some fair tie-breaker of his or her choosing.) The ranking of the cards is as follows.

> pink > red > orange > yellow > blue > hand-with-no-card

If you want to ask a question and you'd like to use a card, just raise that card when attempting to get called on to ask your question. If you are called on, you'll pass your card to the front of the room, where it will be collected by the chair. (And no, you won't get it back. Each card is for one use, over the three days of the conference.)

The cards will be distributed before the first session on Monday morning. Please arrive for that session about 20 minutes early, so you'll have time to collect your cards. (If you don't manage to collect your cards before the first session, no worries: you can always just use a hand to try to get called on during that session, and then collect your cards after the session is over.)

The cards are non-transferable, and you get to use each one only once. Also, if you lose your cards, you will have to resort to using an empty hand whenever you want to get called on – so please don't lose your cards!