

## ASA SCHOOL DEBUTS IN KANSAS CITY

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The idea of an Acoustical Society-sponsored “school,” where graduate students and early career acousticians in all areas of acoustics could learn about and discuss a wide variety of topics, emerged after discussions by the Technical Council at the Acoustical Society of America (ASA) fall 2011 meeting in San Diego. The idea gained wide support within the Society and plans for ASA School 2012 quickly developed. One of the first challenges was to define the subject matter to be covered. Building on the interdisciplinary nature of ASA, *Living in the Acoustic Environment* was selected as the overall theme for the School.

Topic areas included six of ASA’s 13 technical areas, Architectural Acoustics, Engineering Acoustics, Musical Acoustics, Noise, Psychological and Physiological Acoustics, and Speech Communication. This was followed

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by the selection of instructors, two in each discipline. The final program consisted of lectures by 12 prominent acousticians, along with demonstrations and discussions to expand on the lecture material and foster communication across disciplines and technical areas of acoustics.

ASA School 2012 was targeted to graduate students in all areas of acoustics and early career acousticians. The program was designed to offer opportunities to meet instructors and fellow attendees, discuss research topics, develop collaborations and professional relationships within acoustics, and provide mentoring. To foster interaction

and mentorship in a classroom setting, attendance was limited to 40 participants. To keep costs modest, the registration fee for ASA School 2012 was \$50. Hotel rooms for two nights and meals were provided by ASA.



*Group photo of the participants in the ASA School in Kansas City*



“Classroom photo” of the ASA School in Kansas City

The response to this new ASA initiative was remarkable as it drew more applicants than spaces available. The 40 applicants who were selected to participate formed a deeply diverse student body, whose acoustical interests covered the full range of ASA’s subdisciplines, with the largest numbers from Speech Communication and Architectural Acoustics. Participants included students from six countries who were enrolled in Ph.D. or Master’s degree programs in architectural acoustics, speech and hearing, linguistics, engineering fields, and several other disciplines such as physics, oceanography, and neuroscience. Two early-career participants were from acoustical consulting firms.

ASA School 2012 took place on 20-21 October 2012, the weekend immediately preceding the ASA fall meeting in Kansas City. Instructors in *Engineering Acoustics* (Michael Vorländer and Paul Schomer) focused on acoustic measurements and standards, which are prerequisites for scientific research and practical applications in acoustics. Instructors in *Noise* (Bennett Brooks and Brigitte Schulte-Fortkamp) discussed criteria and metrics for the outdoor environment and how to use “soundscape” to rethink the evaluation of noise for a “sensitive environment” and its effects on quality of life. In *Architectural Acoustics*, instructors (Gary Siebein and Erica Ryherd) focused on communication in educational spaces by verbal, multi-media, artistic, musical, and manual means, and on soundscapes for healthcare environments to enhance healing and reduce environmental stressors for staff, patients, and families. Instructors in *Psychological and Physiological Acoustics* (Dan Tollin and Chris Stecker) illustrated how our auditory system determines the spatial location of sound sources, with examples of why our sense of sound location has important consequences in daily life. Continuing this theme, *Speech Communication* instructors (Ann Bradlow and Christine Shadle) showed how human listeners use localization and segregation to perceive and produce sounds and interact with objects in the environment. To conclude, instructors in *Musical Acoustics* (Tom Rossing and Jonas Braasch) described the production and transmission of musical sound from the source to the listener and

explained the scientific study of musical performance.

Sharing meal and break times and social events, including a Friday evening welcome reception and Saturday evening dinner, provided informal settings for further discussion and social exchange. At the closing session, each participant received a certificate of attendance and a USB drive containing all course materials. Participants also attended the ASA meeting immediately following the School, to deepen their understanding of a specific field of acoustics and become better acquainted with scientific work in other fields. All ASA School attendees were authors on lecture or poster presentations at the ASA meeting.

ASA School 2012 received funding from several sponsors, including the Acoustical Society of America ([www.acoustical-society.org](http://www.acoustical-society.org)), the Acoustical Society Foundation Fund ([www.acoustical-society.org/membership/as\\_foundation\\_fund](http://www.acoustical-society.org/membership/as_foundation_fund)), HEAD acoustics, Inc. ([www.head-acoustics.de/eng/](http://www.head-acoustics.de/eng/)), and Scantek, Inc. (<http://www.scantekinc.com/>). The Chair and members of the local organizing committee for the fall 2012 meeting in Kansas City also provided assistance by identifying the venue for the School and by arranging for the audio-visual equipment without cost. This support, which enabled the School to offer the scientific program and other amenities to students at a reasonable cost, is gratefully acknowledged.

Following ASA School 2012, each student attendee and instructor completed an evaluation to provide feedback and suggestions for the next ASA School. The general consensus was that students found ASA School 2012 to be highly beneficial and a positive experience; 100% of attendees recom-



Logo for the ASA School 2012

mended that ASA offer this School at least every other year. Many attendees highlighted the opportunity to network with others in the field and learn about areas of acoustics outside of their primary interests. Indeed, students and instructors shared their email addresses and established communication by social media. The most common suggestion was to increase the diversity of the subject matter. A second request was for more breaks between speakers and a less structured schedule, to allow more time for discussion, questions, and interactions with peers and presenters. Attendees also preferred more demonstrations and hands-on experience, even if this meant less lecture time.

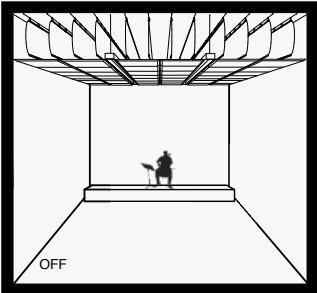
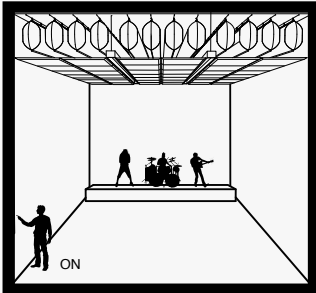
Many students also expressed interest in other ASA technical areas, including Acoustical Oceanography, Animal Bioacoustics, Biomedical Acoustics, Physical Acoustics, Signal Processing in Acoustics, Structural Acoustics and Vibration, and Underwater Acoustics. In keeping with the interdisciplinary acoustical theme, *Living in the Acoustic Environment*, these seven technical areas will be the focus of ASA School 2014, scheduled immediately prior to the ASA spring meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, 3-4 May 2014. For more details, refer to the advertisement in this issue of Acoustics Today, and upcoming announcements by email and on the ASA website ([acousticalsociety.org](http://acousticalsociety.org)).**AT**



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