



*Vivian G. Prins/Scholars at Risk*

# **SPEAKER SERIES**

*A Handbook for Events on Campuses*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was made possible by those scholars and campuses who have shared their experiences with us.

We thank the Office of the Provost and New York University for hosting Scholars at Risk, and the many member institutions, associations, partners, and individuals who have gone out of their way to help threatened and refugee scholars, especially those who have helped to arrange visits, hosted events, mentored scholars, or who have otherwise provided help or advice.

We thank our sponsors and partners, whose vision and generosity have helped to build Scholars at Risk into a vibrant, international movement for free inquiry, free expression, and human rights. These include the Vivian G. Prins Foundation, for core support for services for threatened and refugee scholars; the Open Society Foundations; the National Endowment for Democracy; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the Carnegie Corporation of New York; the Winston Foundation; Stichting Polar Lights; the Vivian G. Prins Fund for Emigrating Scholars at NYU; the Charina Endowment Fund; Fritt Ord Foundation; the AAUP Foundation; the Microsoft Corporation; Newman's Own Foundation; our anonymous donors; the members of SAR's Board, Ambassadors Council, and International Advisory Committee; and SAR's individual members and supporters, all of who help us each day to protect more scholars.

Scholars at Risk depends on the generous financial support of these and other friends inside and outside higher education communities to sustain our work. Gifts of any size are gratefully appreciated, including matching gifts and bequests. To donate, please visit [scholarsatrisk.org](http://scholarsatrisk.org).

August 2019  
ISBN 978-0-9994844-5-6

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# VIVIAN G. PRINS/SCHOLARS AT RISK SPEAKER SERIES

A Scholars at Risk Handbook for Events on Campuses

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**SCHOLARS AT RISK**  
N E T W O R K

 protection  advocacy  learning

# INTRODUCTION

This handbook, designed primarily for higher education institutions by the Scholars at Risk Network (SAR), is a collection of practical information and resources based on the prior experiences of network members, assisted scholars, and SAR staff. In preparing this handbook, we recognize that every speaker visit arrangement between a scholar and an institution presents unique questions. Nevertheless, there are certain common situations and practices that lend themselves to advance cataloging and discussion, which we do here. We believe that addressing these early and in an organized fashion should facilitate a positive experience for the visiting scholar and institution alike.

In the pages that follow, you will find information about SAR and what to expect when inviting a scholar to your university for a speaking engagement. The information here represents overarching advice and is not tailored to any particular country, as there will be differences in every country setting. Still, the general discussion of the process, various challenges that may arise, best practices for dealing with situations, and model resources should be useful for any institution, regardless of location. SAR staff are available to clarify any information in the handbook or to assist with any questions not addressed inside.

Finally, as this handbook is based on the prior experiences of participating institutions and assisted scholars, SAR invites institutions and individuals to share any information which might be useful to include in future editions.

## Why a handbook?

In most cases, hosting visits by at-risk scholars is not very different from hosting other international speakers, especially for shorter visits. Scholars who receive placement support from the network are referred to as “SAR scholar(s)” in the following text. At the same time, the fact that SAR scholars have experienced threats at home—or may fear threats in the future—may raise a number of additional considerations. Recognizing these considerations when planning a visit can help to ensure a more positive experience. Such considerations may include:

- Financial challenges are common but not insurmountable. Scholars who have endured harassment (including possible legal fees or loss of income) or made hasty departures, frequently do not have much, if any, savings. If they do, the savings are usually not available in a new country or would be devalued by conversion, making it difficult for scholars to pay in advance for travel, hotels, etc. and receive payment or reimbursement at a later date;
- Sensitivity to the trauma of forced relocation and past experiences is essential. Most scholars are able to resume their work relatively easily. Some invariably will benefit from meeting with counseling professionals. Scholars may have security concerns, either for themselves upon a return to their home country or for family or colleagues left behind;
- Flight, exile, and procedures around visas, asylum processes, and work authorization create uncertainties, especially when family are present; and
- Some scholars will face a painful, personal decision concerning their long-term plans. Should they seek asylum or live with the uncertainty of exile, holding on to hopes that change is coming at home? Perhaps, safe return will be possible soon, if not this year, then next? Family issues play a large part in these questions—even scholars who are single generally leave extended family behind. Married scholars are frequently forced to leave spouses and children behind, at least for an initial period while they re-establish themselves.

These issues may not arise in the context of a speaking engagement, but they are important to keep in mind. This handbook offers suggestions for addressing unique considerations of at-risk scholars, along with suggestions for addressing the normal challenges associated with hosting any international visitor.

## Why are scholars threatened?

SAR has worked with scholars worldwide who have faced a wide variety of academic freedom and human rights violations. Based on these real examples, we see three general reasons why scholars are threatened.

Scholars are threatened because the content of their work, research, or teaching is perceived as threatening by authorities or other groups. Academia by nature requires the development of ideas, exchange of information, and expression of new opinions. Where such ideas, information, and opinions are considered threatening, individual scholars are particularly vulnerable.

Scholars are also threatened because of their status. Because of their education, frequent travel and professional standing, scholars are often prominent members of their community. Where a scholar is a member of a political, ethnic, or religious minority, female, or a member of LGBTQ+ communities, especially in areas where opportunities for advanced education are limited, an attack on an individual scholar may be a highly visible and efficient means for intimidating and silencing an entire community of people.

Scholars are threatened because of their exercise of fundamental human rights belonging to all persons, especially freedom of expression. Academic freedom involves the right of scholars to carry out research and to disseminate and publish the results thereof, to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, to be free from institutional censorship, and to participate in professional or representative academic bodies. When authorities restrict research, travel, and other means of collaboration, scholars may be unable to advance their work. As a result, scholars may call for greater openness and transparency in society generally, an action that can strengthen an authority's resolve to restrict scholarship and target individual scholars for persecution.

In addition, threats against scholars may be compounded during situations of internal armed conflict and civil or international wars, where masses of persons may be threatened with indiscriminate violence and where the breakdown of law and public order may facilitate increased levels of targeted attacks against scholars and other specific classes of persons.

## Who threatens scholars?

There is a tendency to assume that attacks on scholars are committed by a repressive state power—a dictator or junta. Sometimes that perception is correct. But the defense of academic freedom requires a more studied model. In some places the repressive agent is only one branch or wing of a government, like the military, the secret police, a political party, or subnational authority. At other times it may be a non-government agent, including militants and paramilitaries. (Indeed, in some places scholars have come under attack from both the left, in the form of left-wing armed guerilla movements, and the right, in the form of armed paramilitary death squads.) These also include religious authorities, criminal organizations, or even otherwise-legal commercial enterprises.

## What types of threats?

While any given scholar may suffer one or more types of incidents, frequently scholars experience incidents which escalate in intensity, leaving a scholar vulnerable to more serious, more violent attacks. For example, a scholar may initially suffer some form of harassment, including perhaps warnings and surveillance. This may escalate to denial of accesses or permissions, confiscation of documents and computers, professional or personal slander or defamation, or even physical or sexual intimidation. The scholar's colleagues may themselves be warned to avoid the scholar or may do so of their own volition to avoid a similar fate. This leaves the scholar increasingly vulnerable to more serious pressures, including arbitrary dismissal, exile, arrest on false charges, detention with or without trial, imprisonment, torture, disappearance, and death.

Also worth noting are the types of wider attacks suffered by higher education communities as a whole. These include: ideological pressure and censorship (including imposition of approved national ideology, book burning, and ideological revisionism), closing of schools and universities, suppression of strikes or protests, restrictions on travel and exchange of information, and discriminatory restrictions on academic resources, including discrimination against women, indigenous peoples, and cultural or ethnic minorities.

### Why a network?

SAR is an international network of higher education institutions and associations. The network's breadth makes it easier to identify scholars most in need of assistance and provides maximum flexibility in finding support for them, including temporary hosting arrangements. Furthermore, the network facilitates the exchange of ideas and best practices among member institutions, making hosting more effective and less costly than isolated, ad hoc efforts. This maximizes the resources available for threatened scholars and therefore increases the number of scholars who can be helped.

Beyond direct assistance for individual scholars, the network strengthens solidarity within the global higher education community in support of academic freedom and related values. Attacks on these values are a global problem, too numerous and widespread for any single institution or individual to address alone.

A collective response is needed. SAR provides that response.

# WHAT IS THE VIVIAN G. PRINS/SAR SPEAKER SERIES?

The Vivian G. Prins/Scholars at Risk (SAR) Speaker Series educates campus communities and the public about threats to academic freedom and attacks on scholars. The Speaker Series provides an opportunity for higher education institutions to invite SAR scholars to campus for short visits to share their powerful stories in a personal, meaningful way.

During Speaker Series events, which are generally open to the public, SAR scholars may share insights on academic freedom based on their unique experiences, or may discuss their academic work and how being under threat has impacted it. By participating in the Speaker Series, SAR scholars have a chance to share their stories and make new professional contacts. Higher education institutions hosting events have a chance to expose their faculty and students to these scholars' extraordinary examples of commitment to academic inquiry and integrity, while highlighting their institution's support of SAR and its efforts to defend academic freedom worldwide.

Often Speaker Series events open space for dialogue between administrators, professors, students, and the public about contemporary issues affecting higher education. By approaching these through the experience of individuals who have had the courage to stand up to intellectual repression, participants gain insights into the issues and a deeper appreciation of the vital role scholars and higher education institutions can and should play in society. Past event hosts have shared that the Speaker Series has increased awareness of academic freedom issues on their campuses and inspired action in defense of academic freedom both at home and abroad.

## HOSTING AN EVENT

When you invite a SAR scholar to speak, you shape the event in whatever way best suits your campus community. If a SAR scholar is already living or visiting near your institution, a single event of only a few hours may be arranged. If travel is required, often a SAR scholar will participate in a handful of events over a one-, two-, or three-day visit, speaking with different sectors of the campus community. This may include guest lecturing in classes, meeting with student groups, meeting with faculty associations or departments, and speaking at formal and informal public events. To help you decide how to host an event that best suits your campus, consider the following types and examples of past events.

### *Types of events*

#### **Public lectures**

Generally, these are given to larger audiences in a classroom, auditorium, or other large meeting space. They are most often open to the entire campus community and the public. Because of the size and nature of these events, institutions may find it advantageous to hold a small reception or dinner following the lecture in order to provide campus officials and organizers the opportunity to speak with the scholar in a more intimate setting. (This type of event may also provide an opportunity to introduce the scholar to important constituents or to cultivate prospective donors who might support future SAR-related activities on campus.)

#### **Classroom visits**

These create the opportunity for students and scholars to interact on a personal level, depending on class size. Professors may want to discuss the class syllabus with the scholar prior to the visit in order to enhance lesson plans and maximize the educational component of the visit. For example, scholars may be able to suggest readings or prepare slide or video presentations about their work or the conditions in their home country for discussion with students during the class.

#### **Roundtable discussions**

Generally private and often invitation-only, roundtable discussions can facilitate intimate communication and promote deeper intellectual discussions than can be achieved in large, public events. Small discussion groups give each participant the time and opportunity to explore the scholar's views and their own. Participants may include SAR scholars, professors, graduate students, and others interested in the scholar's field, home country, or a specified topic of discussion.

#### **Panel discussions**

These generally involved two to four individuals discussing a particular country, academic freedom issue, or academic topic, usually with a faculty or student moderator. Multiple SAR scholars may be invited to participate on the same panel, or local co-panelists may be invited including faculty, students, or experts from outside the campus. Often participants will discuss the plan for the panel in advance by phone or email, or the moderator may communicate expectations for the panel in advance to each participant individually. At the event, the moderator may present prepared questions to panelists and facilitate questions from the audience.

#### **Meal discussions**

Breakfast talks at faculty meetings, lunchtime "brown-bags" with students, and informal conversations with small groups over coffee or meals are all excellent ways to enhance a visit and to give more members of the

campus community a chance to connect with the scholar. They can be held anywhere, including faculty or student lounges, dining, or residence halls, or other communal spaces. These casual talks may or may not include a formal presentation, generally of only a few minutes, followed by questions and open discussion. Depending on the local practice, organizers may provide food or snacks before or during the discussion, or participants may bring or purchase their own.

## **Workshops**

These generally consist of a series of meetings or seminars, usually with a small number of participants, framed around a common interest area, topic, or goal. Workshops generally emphasize exchange of information, dialogue, and critique. A regular workshop group may host a series of visitors over the course of a year or semester. Visitors often prepare a paper in advance, which is then presented and discussed on the day of the workshop. A SAR scholar might be invited to participate in a workshop as a one-time visitor or, if timing and locations permit, as a regular participant or co-convenor of a workshop group related to their expertise or personal experience.

## **Educational tours**

Inviting a SAR scholar to lead a group of students, staff, or professors through a local museum, event, or exhibit relevant to the scholar's expertise can be an informal, engaging way to educate and involve the campus community.

## IDENTIFYING A SAR SPEAKER

SAR staff compiles a list of current and alumni SAR scholars who are available to participate in the Vivian G. Prins/SAR Speaker Series events. The list provides short summaries on each scholar, including country of origin, area of expertise, and possible speaking topics. They are listed anonymously for security reasons. The list of scholars available for the Speaker Series events can be viewed on the SAR website. Once you have identified a scholar you would like to consider for an event, you can submit an inquiry online or by emailing [scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu](mailto:scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu).

When determining which scholar or scholars to invite to campus, institutions should consider the scholar's professional expertise, home country, and current location. Also consider the type of event or events you might like to hold, and the anticipated audiences. SAR staff can offer advice and assistance to you throughout the planning and selection process, including advice on which scholars on the list might be most suitable for your intended event.

When you have identified a candidate you would like to invite, communicate your choice to SAR staff, along with basic details about any planned events. Staff will then communicate with the scholar or scholars to confirm their interest and availability for any dates proposed. Once the scholar or scholars confirm their availability, SAR staff will introduce them to the designated contact at the institution to make final arrangements directly, although staff are happy to continue to assist planning the event if helpful.

## EXTENDING AN INVITATION

Once the scholar and institution are in contact, they should discuss and decide upon the terms of the invitation. These should include:

- date(s) of visit;
- the type of event or events to be held;
- the expectations of the scholar at the event or events (including any requests for materials or presentations to be prepared in advance);
- costs to be covered by the host (including visa fees and honorarium, where appropriate);
- travel arrangements (including if these will be arranged/paid for by the host);
- the expectations regarding any advertising or media requests (including discussing with the scholar any confidentiality or security concerns around their name being used publicly);
- a proposed schedule for the visit and activities; and
- any other details or expectations.

These details should be discussed and agreed upon, then confirmed in writing by email or in a formal invitation letter before travel arrangements or other financial commitments are made by either the scholar or the institution.

## PREPARING FOR A SCHOLAR'S VISIT

The preparation required for a visit will vary depending on factors such as its duration, the events planned, the location of the institution, and the scholar's starting location.

### *Budget*

In general, Vivian G. Prins/SAR Speaker Series events are an easy, low-cost way to be involved in SAR's work and to expose the campus community to courageous, inspiring individuals committed to academic inquiry and integrity. The costs of organizing a visit will depend on the type, number, and duration of events planned. Budget items might include:

- long-distance travel or local travel;
- accommodations;
- meals for visitors and food or drinks during any receptions or events;
- venue, technology, or other event costs;
- mileage or other reimbursement for anyone meeting the scholar(s) at an airport or other location distant from the campus;
- advertising, copying, or printing programs and posters; and
- an honorarium.

Sources of funding for Speaker Series events vary. Some institutions set up a special budget for SAR-related activities. Others may fund an event within an existing visitor program or lecture series. Depending on the scholar's expertise or country of origin, various schools, departments, centers, or regional studies programs may contribute full or partial support. Student organizers may solicit funds from group members, from student government or activities fees, or from administrators. Senior leadership may be able to contribute from a special program budget (such as funds for diversity, internationalization, or campus-community engagement) or contingency fund. In-kind contributions can also be used to offset costs of an event, for example use of an apartment for a visiting SAR scholar for the few days of the visit or a complimentary meal plan in a campus dining facility.

Speaker Series events can generally be organized at any budget level. If funds are limited, organizers might prioritize shorter events with locally-based scholars, thereby eliminating the costs of long-distance travel, accommodations, and most meals. Another way to reduce costs is to coordinate planning with multiple departments or schools within the institution, or with one or more neighboring institutions. The scholar(s) could participate in events at each institution, and the costs of bringing a scholar to the area can be shared.

While not possible for every visit, especially local visits lasting only a few hours, honoraria for SAR scholars invited to campus are always appreciated. In general, SAR recommends offering honoraria at levels comparable to those granted to other invited speakers on campus. Honoraria are important demonstrations of the organizers' appreciation for the scholar's time and effort in preparing for the visit. Moreover, most current and alumni SAR scholars continue to suffer from the interruption to their career trajectory caused by the threats or attacks they suffered in their home countries, including loss of income and long-term benefits or pensions. Fellowships and stipends offered by institutions provide temporary support, but these only go so far and in many cases are modest. Honoraria for speaking events are an important source of supplementary income for many SAR scholars. Event organizers may contact SAR staff to discuss what a suitable arrangement might be in a particular case.

## ***Travel***

Where travel is required, it is generally preferable for the institution to book any flight or train tickets directly, after confirming the itinerary with the scholar. That way the scholar will not have to advance travel costs out of limited personal funds and wait for reimbursement, which can often take many weeks. (Booking directly by the institution may also save paperwork and administrative time required to process reimbursement.) Unless the cost difference is prohibitive, SAR strongly recommends booking direct flights for scholars to avoid risks of delay or other complications en route. However, this may be difficult depending on the institution and the scholar's original location. Final travel itineraries, tickets, and receipts should be sent to the scholar for travel and for the scholar to keep in their personal records.

## ***Accommodations***

Where overnight travel is required, a scholar will need accommodations. It is usually most convenient for the scholar to stay on campus. The majority of activities planned during the visit will be on campus, and this will allow the scholar to rest or work between appointments.

Options might include an on-campus guesthouse or hotel, or use of an apartment or dormitory room reserved for visitors. (If housing is in a dormitory, ensure that the scholar will have adequate security, privacy, and relief from late-night noise or other activities which might disrupt the visit. Dormitory monitors may help in ensuring suitable conditions.)

If housing a scholar off-campus, make arrangements for accommodations as close to the planned event as possible. This will reduce travel time and increase the availability of the scholar to faculty, students, and others. Local hotels, inns, and bed and breakfasts can be very nice, but carefully consider all relevant factors before choosing, including not only the distance to and from events but transportation options and access to local services such as restaurants or shops. Inspect the rooms personally before the scholar arrives, checking for any mobility hazards (such as excessive stairs), noise issues, or other potential disruptions. Minimum necessities include air conditioning or heat (depending on the season), a comfortable bed, a good reading light, internet access, a desk, a telephone, access to newspapers, and a private bathroom. If the scholar is staying off campus, arrange for a car, taxi, or organizer to bring the scholar to and from campus as needed. Provide the scholar with a list of contact information for people, taxis, or car services available to help with transit between the accommodations, the campus, and local services.

## ***Information exchange***

Once the invitation has been accepted and travel arrangements have begun, the institution and scholar should exchange whatever other information may be needed to prepare for the visit. For example, the institution may want to request from the scholar:

- a short biographical statement and photograph (subject to any security or confidentiality issues) for use in introductions and advertising the event(s);
- a title and description of any formal talks or lectures planned;
- copies of any materials the scholar or organizers might want to circulate;
- scholar's contact information while traveling;
- any audio-visual or technology requests for the scholar's presentation (such as internet access, a laptop computer, audio, or video/PowerPoint projector on site); and
- any other requests.

The institution may also want to compile and share with the scholar:

- a schedule of other events and lectures that the scholar might be interested in attending while visiting, if time permits;
- information about the institution and its student and community profiles (for tailoring talks and presentations to local interests, where appropriate);
- a campus map and information on transportation to and from campus;
- information on any accommodations, if relevant;
- information about campus or surrounding areas to visit, time permitting;
- instructions for accessing email or internet on campus (including a guest login, if necessary); and
- contact information for organizers of the event, including persons to contact in the event of delays or emergencies (flight delays, accidents, etc.).

## ***Visa authorization (if required)***

If the scholar(s) will be visiting from another country, the institution may need to help in arranging for a visa. A formal letter of invitation containing all the relevant details—location, duration of the visit, purpose of the visit, financial arrangements—may be sufficient for the scholar to seek a tourist or general business visa. Alternatively, an institution may need to complete paperwork to apply for the visa on behalf of the scholar. In this case, the scholar will need to provide the organizers with a copy of the photo page, relevant visa page of the passport, and possibly other documents (such as a CV). In either case, begin the process as early as possible, and remember to build into any invitation letter or application additional days before and after the event to allow adjustment of travel plans if anything unexpected happens.

Even if the scholar(s) will be visiting from within the same country, visa authorization may be required. Check with your institution's International Office or other responsible office. For example, scholars in the United States on a J visa who will be receiving payment for the visit will need to provide the organizers with a letter of permission from the J visa sponsoring institution, along with a copy of the I-94, a copy of the photo page and relevant visa page of the passport, and possibly other documents. Organizers should consult the International Office or other responsible office at the institution about these requirements. If necessary, include a meeting with the International Office in the scholar's itinerary during the visit to obtain any necessary signatures or documentation.

## ***Scheduling the event(s)***

When scheduling an event, try to avoid conflicting with standard class schedules, activities, and other special events. Choose a venue that is just a bit smaller than the turnout you expect, rather than larger. As a speaker, it is better to address a full room with an audience close to you than a sparsely filled space with people spread out. Check lighting and audio equipment to make sure everyone will be able to see and hear the scholar. If the scholar will use technology during the event, ask for copies of any files in advance, so they can be loaded and tested.

## ***Publicity and confidentiality***

Before publicizing the scholar's visit or any events, ask the scholar about any security or confidentiality concerns. Most of the scholars on the Speaker Series list will be willing to speak openly to the media and do not have any specific security concerns once outside of their home country. Some however may have heightened security concerns stemming from the risks experienced in their home country. Some worry

about retaliation against family or colleagues left behind, others worry about surveillance (usually of emails, but sometimes of events or lectures) or other intimidation or harassment even while they are away from home. They may therefore ask that any media story or event announcement be anonymous or that a pseudonym is used. But because scholars are often identifiable from the content of their work, even using a pseudonym or making a story anonymous may not be enough to ensure the scholar's confidentiality. A general rule in such cases is to limit as much as possible identifying or corroborating information that appears in any story, such as the scholar's name, image, titles of books or papers, specific discipline (vs. department), specific country (vs. region), and dates of arrival and expected departure. Always discuss with scholars before any publicity using their name, image, or other identifying information online, on posters, on event programs or in media stories. Before the scholar's visit, it is advisable to also discuss possible faculty, administration, media, students, or other contacts to whom the scholar may be introduced during the visit, as scholars prefer to know beforehand who they are to meet (and may have preferences about how/if they are introduced to individuals on campus.)

After discussing publicity with the scholar, contact your campus media, public affairs, or public relations office. Prepare for them a schedule, approved biography (redacted as necessary) and photograph (if agreed upon previously with the scholar) of the scholar. Ask for help in suggesting the most effective publicity campaign. Inquire well before the event if the scholar is comfortable with photography at the event and confirm any restrictions they may request.

You may also wish to draft a press release, poster, flyer, email, or other announcements of the scholar's visit. Use these to boost turnout and make it easy to find events by including the building name, room number, and map or diagram highlighting the location. Deliver and post copies of flyers to relevant departments, centers, student clubs and groups, residence halls (and resident assistants), and public bulletin boards, and announce the event on online calendars, email lists, and through campus media outlets.

In order to encourage student participation, ask faculty members in related disciplines to announce the event in their classes, to build a class discussion around the event, or to include attendance at the event in any extra credit opportunities. Whenever practical, personal invitations asking for participation (by email, phone, and in-person) are much more effective than general announcements. Receptions or light refreshments after the event can increase turnout as well as offer pleasant opportunities for continued discussion. Invite the entire audience, but send special invitations before the event to administrators, faculty members, graduate students, final-year students, donors and prospective supporters of future SAR-related activities.

Include the local community in your outreach. If an institutional calendar is mailed to the local community, be sure the event poster or announcement is included. Do not forget to include local community groups also, including alumni groups, relevant ethnic or immigrant communities, charitable and service organizations, religious communities, arts and culture societies, and book clubs. Remember that SAR scholars can speak to many topics, not only their academic or professional work. They may be willing to discuss their personal experience as an at-risk scholar, general conditions in their home country, or other areas of interest to a wide audience. After conferring with the scholar, be creative about scheduling a variety of events during the visit to appeal to as many members of the community as possible.

Finally, send the announcement to faculty members and relevant department chairs from neighboring institutions who might be interested in the event. Ask them to share it with their colleagues and offer to set up a meeting with scholar. Send the announcement to SAR staff, which will invite SAR members and friends in your area.

## VISIT AND POST-VISIT CONSIDERATIONS

Organizing a visit is not difficult, but there are many details to address.

### ***Arrival***

You should already have agreed with the visitor(s) well in advance of the arrival day when and how the scholar will get to campus. Most important is whether the scholar will be met at the airport, train, or bus station before getting to campus. Reconfirm these details during the week before the visit. Provide the name, contact information, and description of the person(s) meeting the scholar. If this information changes and you have to send someone different, make every effort to communicate the new information to the scholar in advance, or provide the new person with a letter identifying themselves for the scholar.

If the scholar is getting to campus independently, try to have someone present upon arrival to the accommodations to greet the scholar. If this is not practical, such as when the exact arrival time is not known, then leave a note of welcome for the scholar. It may be nice to leave a small care package, such as water and snacks, especially if a scholar is travelling from great distance or arriving at off hours when a meal may be hard to obtain easily.

### ***Getting settled***

Depending on the length of the visit and the distance a scholar may have travelled, it may be advised to build into the schedule a period of time for the scholar to get settled in the accommodations and to rest before beginning speaking events and meetings. While this probably is not necessary for local scholars visiting only for a few hours for a mid-day talk, for scholars arriving from an airport for a multi-day visit allowing some time to get settled will help the scholar be rested and ready for the events planned.

### ***Event venues***

Depending on the nature of the event(s) planned, it may be advised to bring the scholar to any event venues in advance. This is especially recommended for formal lectures or events for large audiences. This will give the scholar a chance to see the space and to get familiar with it, including any steps or platforms, lighting, microphones and video projectors, or other technology. This is also an opportunity to test any computer, video, or other files or materials the scholar will use during the event(s).

### ***Meal arrangements***

Meals can be a significant portion of any visit budget. Some institutions use campus catering or dining facilities for all event-related meals. While this is the least expensive alternative, be sure these facilities provide an appropriate experience for a professional visitor. Other institutions have had faculty members host dinners in their homes or at restaurants, and provided modest reimbursement for expenses. Meals in restaurants and clubs are the most expensive but may be easier to arrange, and may be justified, especially if trustees, donors, or other important persons are invited. (Sometimes an administrative office or fundraising/development office can cover the costs if an important alumnus or donor/prospect is participating.) Mealtimes can offer excellent opportunities to introduce a scholar to student groups, faculty in the host department, or administrators instrumental in arranging the visit. In the past, student interest clubs have sponsored pizza or brown bag lunches with scholars. Scholars have also met with small groups of faculty from similar fields for on-campus lunches. Dinners may offer opportunities for more

leisurely conversation but require more time to arrange than lunchtime events. Invitations to dinners should be personalized and the scholar's bio should be included with invitations. (If possible, provide the scholar with a list of attendees in advance.) Other examples that you might consider include an informal buffet breakfast, lunch, or dinner/reception sponsored by a center or department; a dinner for faculty in the scholar's field and/or with administrators of the institution; or a private meal with a special interest group (gender, nationality, religion, etc.) or student club. In considering meal options, make sure to request information beforehand whether the scholar has any dietary restrictions.

## ***Rest periods***

Scholars visiting for Vivian G. Prins/SAR Speaker Series events are generally eager to meet as many people as possible and to make the most of the visit. However, travelling, meeting many new people, and giving multiple formal and informal talks, often in a non-native language, can be tiring. Depending on the length of the visit and the distance a scholar may have travelled, it may be advised to build into the schedule of events brief rest periods, independent of mealtimes, for the scholar(s) to relax, rest, and prepare for upcoming activities. This is especially important when mealtimes are used for formal or informal talks.

## ***Departure***

As with arrival, you should agree with the visitor(s) in advance about the day of departure and how the scholar will be leaving campus. Most important is whether the scholar will be taken to the airport, train, or bus station by the university, or whether a taxi, car service, shuttle, or other transportation will be used. Reconfirm these details early in the visit. Provide the scholar with the name, contact information, and description of any person(s) assisting with travel. If this information changes make every effort to communicate the new information to the scholar in advance or provide the new person with a letter identifying themselves for the scholar.

## ***Post-event evaluation***

After the visit, ask for feedback from persons involved in organizing the visit and those who attended any events. Ask about the professional dimensions of the visit—the nature of any talk(s), the content, and the ways it tied in to department or student group goals and needs. Ask about the personal impact of the visit—how did persons who met the scholar feel about the experience? Did they find it to be valuable? What might have made it even better? Finally, ask about logistical issues—was the visit organized well? What went well? What might be improved in future visits? Conducting these post-visit evaluations will help your campus assess each visit and make the most of future events.

If you are willing, SAR would invite you to share any individual evaluations or an overall evaluation of the scholar and the visit with SAR staff. These evaluations help SAR assess the strengths and weaknesses of different speakers and event formats, and serve as SAR's basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the Vivian G. Prins/SAR Speaker Series as a whole.

## RESOURCES

The following resources may be helpful for institutions to keep track of important items before, during, and after a scholar's visit. All are available online at [scholarsatrisk.org](http://scholarsatrisk.org).

*List of SAR Scholars Available for Events  
Inquiry Form to Invite a SAR Scholar to Campus  
SAR Speaker Series Checklist*

## PUBLICATIONS

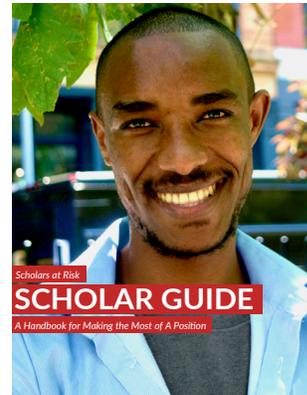
These SAR publications and others can be found online at [scholarsatrisk.org](http://scholarsatrisk.org).



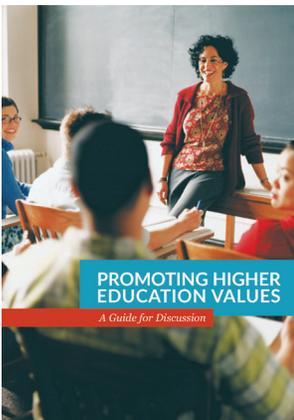
Vivian G. Prins/SAR  
Speaker Series



How to Host



Scholar Guide



Promoting Higher  
Education Values Guide



Getting Involved



Free to Think 2018

Scholars at Risk (SAR) is an international network of institutions and individuals whose mission it is to protect scholars, promote academic freedom, and defend everyone's right to think, question, and share ideas freely and safely.

By offering temporary academic positions to professors, lecturers, researchers, and other intellectuals who suffer dangerous conditions in their home country, SAR members help scholars to continue their important work. In return, scholars contribute to their host campuses through teaching, research, lectures, and other activities. The benefits are clear: scholars are free to live and work without fear. SAR members gain talented academics and inspiring, courageous educators. The world benefits from greater awareness of current threats to academic freedom and of the vital role of higher education in free societies.

SAR also advises scholars and hosts, campaigns for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries, monitors attacks on higher education communities worldwide, and provides leadership in deploying new tools and strategies for promoting academic freedom and improving respect for university values everywhere.

Institutions and individuals who share in these values are invited to contact SAR about opportunities to get involved including hosting threatened scholars, advocating for imprisoned academics, monitoring attacks on higher education, and participating in workshops, trainings, conferences, and working groups, among other activities.

SAR depends on the generous financial support of friends inside and outside higher education communities to sustain our work. Gifts of any size are gratefully appreciated, including gifts in honor or memory of others, matching gifts, and legacies.

To learn more, get involved, or make a gift to help sustain SAR's work, visit [scholarsatrisk.org](https://scholarsatrisk.org).

## SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK

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## NETWORK

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*Scholars at Risk is an independent not-for-profit corporation hosted at  
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ISBN 978-0-9994844-5-6



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