Chapter 4: Event Planning

Steps to Event Planning

Evaluate the Audience
Determine exactly for whom the event is being planned. Know the target age, interests, and likes or dislikes of the audience. Sometimes it may be helpful to generate a survey or ask around to see in what activities a potential audience would like to participate.

Generate Ideas
Get a diverse group of people together to begin brainstorming. The student organization should plan out several weeks or even months in advance. All members should suggest ideas no matter how bizarre! The greater the quantity, the better the chance of getting a quality idea.

Next, narrow the list down and decide what event or event would be best for the student organization's needs. The following questions should be considered: What is the student organization's budget? What resources (facilities, staffing, publicity) are necessary? Which University policies regulate the event? Does there appear to be audience support for the event? Is there enough time to plan the event well?

The student organization's leader should then delegate someone to be in charge of each event decided upon.

Set the Date
The date is very important to the event's success. Here is a brief process to select the best date:

1. Set a tentative date. Keep in mind prohibited dates, such as finals week.
2. Check to see if any other events that may divert attendance are scheduled on that day. Consult the Campus Activities Office.
3. Check for facility availability on the UNet Savii software (for non-academic spaces) or contact the Facility Scheduling Coordinator in Physical Plant for assistance.

Make the Arrangements
Taking care of details is where the work really starts.

- Obtain University approval, if applicable. Certain types of events (e.g. events involving the sale or distribution of alcohol, service projects, fundraising projects, political speakers, events open to off-campus guests) require approval from applicable University departments. Refer to the “Event Guidelines for Student Organizations” section for additional information.

- Determine your budget for the event. Consider all financial needs, including rental of facilities and equipment, honoraria, contract fees, catering, accommodations, transportation, and publicity.

- Reserve facility space. Request your facility space/room reservation thru Express Request on the UNet webpage.

- Reserve or rent needed equipment. The best time to reserve University equipment is when reserving facility space. Requests that exceed the University’s resources will require rental from outside vendors.
  1. Audio equipment (stereos, mics)
  2. Visual equipment (TV’s, projectors)
  3. Computers
  4. Extension Cords
  5. Tables and chairs
  6. Staging
  7. Sound system and lighting

- Negotiate and sign the contract (if applicable). If the event involves a contract with performers, businesses, or facility operators, contact the Director of Campus Activities/University Center for assistance. Students are not authorized to sign contracts. Only full-time employees (e.g. advisors) are authorized agents of the University.
  1. Arrange food service for performers and speakers, as stipulated in their contract. Note that the University prohibits hospitality requests for any type of alcohol or tobacco products.
  2. Arrange hotel accommodations for performers and speakers, as stipulated in their contract.
  3. Arrange transportation, including airfare, rental cars, and transportation to and from the airport, for performers and speakers, as stipulated in their contract.

- Arrange for food service. The following information will be helpful when ordering food:
  1. Date, time, and location of event
  2. Time the food is to be delivered or picked up
  3. Money or purchase order number
  4. Anticipated number of servings

- Arrange for parking for all performers or speakers, if applicable. Contact University Police to obtain a visitor parking pass, providing them with details of the visitor’s vehicle (make, model, year, color, license number). Notify University Police of all buses, RV’s, and other large vehicles that require on-campus parking.
Delegate tasks to organization members and officers. Shared ownership of events tends to result in greater dedication and motivation.

Retain all original receipts and invoices. “Petty Cash Vouchers” and “Purchase Orders” will not be processed without original receipts. Designate one officer or member to retain these and other records of financial transactions.

All of these arrangements should be handled well in advance of the event. This will save last minute hassles and headaches as the event approaches. The Director of Campus Activities/University Center can assist in this process.

Advertise
Advertisement is the key to a successful event. The best event in the world will fail if nobody knows about it. Each advertisement should contain the name of the program, the date, the time, the location, the admission price (if any), the name of the sponsoring organization(s), and contact information.

Use different types of advertisement and place them in different locations. Posters on bulletin boards or flyers in mailboxes are generally not paid much attention. Word of mouth is by far the best way to get people to events. If people are really excited about an event, they will be there.

Another idea for successful advertising is to use two waves. The first wave should be about two weeks before the event to get people excited and talking about the event. The second wave should come about a day or two before the event to remind people.

Consider the following methods of publicizing events:
• KOLL announcements
• LakeFront advertisements or articles
• “E-Currents” announcements or articles
• Weekend College newsletter announcements
• Table tents (UWAC Great Hall, Cafeteria, Worden Lounge, Jersig Lounge)
• Door hangers in the residence halls (Contact the Residence Life Office for approval.)
• Mailings (letters, invitations, postcards) to targeted audiences (Contact the Registrar’s Office to obtain address labels.)

The Event
In order to insure a successful event, the following should be accomplished:

1. Confirm that all checks have been requested for performers, that all facilities have been reserved, and that all equipment has been reserved or rented. Contact all applicable offices personally.

2. All deliveries and performances should be re-confirmed two days in advance.

3. The individual in charge of the event should arrive early to make sure of all last minute details.

4. Someone should greet performers, speakers, or special guests before the start of the event.

5. After the event, all clean-up should occur.

6. Individuals who assisted with the event should be thanked.

Evaluate
This is one of the most important aspects of event planning because future officers and members can learn from organizational successes and mistakes. The best way to evaluate is to write a wrap-up report, a written step-by-step evaluation of what was done to pull the event off. This evaluation should then be filed so it can be referred to in the future. Also, include suggestions of what would make the event better the next time.

Activities and Events Checklist

Date, Location, and Site
1. Has the event’s date been set and the Director of Campus Activities notified?

2. Where will the event be held?

3. Has the facility or field space been reserved?

4. Is the facility accessible to people with disabilities? Is there a wheelchair ramp? Is there adequate seating for people in wheelchairs and their companions?

5. If the event is outdoors, have you reserved backup space in case of rain?

6. Do you need sprinklers or outdoor lights turned on or off?

7. Do you need power? Is there an outlet available?

8. What restroom access will there be? Are restrooms accessible to people with disabilities? Do any nearby buildings need to be unlocked?

9. Do any streets need to be blocked off? Is it cleared with University Police?

10. Are you charging admission or charging for food? And if so was a fundraising form submitted.

11. Have you followed health safety regulations for selling food?
12. Did you double check all event needs (ie. Media Services, Campus Dining, Housekeeping, etc…)

**Talent**
1. Are all talent or speakers contracted/notified?
2. If your activity is a lecture, forum, or speaker format, has a sign language interpreter been contracted?
3. Does your talent require payment? Have you requested a check?
4. Does your talent know exactly what they are doing? Have you discussed your expectations?
5. When will the talent arrive? What time will the rehearsal or the sound check be?
6. Have lodging and food for talent been taken care of?
7. Do you have a time line/order of events/agenda for your program?

**Equipment Needs**
1. Do you have any sound or lighting needs?
2. Have you reserved the needed equipment?
3. Who will operate/set up this equipment?
4. Do you have chairs, projectors, DVDs, tables, podiums, staging, etc. reserved? (contact Media Delivery and/or Physical Plant)
5. Do you have garbage cans? (contact Physical Plant)
6. Do you have name tags for event participants?
7. Who will bring/set up any of the above equipment needs?
8. Do you have any needed props or special items?

**Transportation**
1. Do you have transportation needs secured? (contact Physical Plant)
2. Do you have certified drivers for vans? (25 years.+ & OLLU staff or faculty)

**Publicity**
1. Have you requested publicity for your event?
2. Who will be doing the publicity?
3. What are the key publicity points to hit?

**Volunteer Staff (Before, During, and After)**
1. What time will set up be? Allow for sufficient time! (Plan for at least two hours.)
2. Who will be setting up? How many people do you need during the event? How many people do you need to clean up after the event?
3. Have you met with all your volunteer staff so that everyone knows what to do?

**Security**
1. Do you need security at your event? Has University Police been requested and confirmed?
2. Is your event outdoors? Has University Police been requested and confirmed?

**All events open to the public and/or by invitation only must have the approval of the Director of Campus Activities/University Center, and are BY INVITATION ONLY.**

**Insurance**
1. Have you checked to see if you need insurance liability waivers? (contact the Director of Campus Activities)
2. If insurance liability waivers are required, have all participants returned them?

**Food**
1. Is Campus Dining taking care of food needs? Have orders been placed and confirmed?
2. If Campus Dining is not providing food, who is providing it? Has this been approved?
3. Are you providing necessary utensils, cups, plates, etc.?

**Miscellaneous Questions**
1. Do you need prizes?
2. What is your event’s capacity? How will you control your crowds?
3. Do you need tape, scissors, paper, balloons, helium, etc. for decorations?

**Co-sponsorship of Events**

Co-sponsorship is an event planning option for student organizations that lack the resources to single-handedly plan and coordinate events. Through co-sponsorship, student organizations may seek assistance from other organizations for financial and staffing resources.
As a general rule, the more individuals that are involved in event planning, the more creative ideas that are generated, the more potential workers and support staff is available, and the more likely the event may be successful. Each organization’s role in planning and coordinating the event should be clearly defined for maximum benefit of all organizations involved.

Student organizations may consider co-sponsoring events with other student organizations, as well as other University departments or offices

University Programming Council
The University Programming Council (UPC) offers cultural, educational, and social experiences to the student body. UPC programs range from entertaining activities, to discussions on current issues. Many of the University’s major campus events are developed, coordinated, and facilitated by students on UPC, including Festivals, Comedians, Poetry Nights, Casino Nights and the Candlelight Dinner and Dance. UPC involvement allows students to work with a unified team, to build confidence in their abilities to lead, and to develop event coordination, budget management, and volunteer recruitment skills.

Student organizations are encouraged to contact UPC, whose office is located in the UWAC, in order to co-sponsor events. UPC Chairpersons may be able to assist with logistics, financing, publicity, performer or speaker identification, volunteer recruitment, and other aspects of event planning.

Event Guidelines for Student Organizations
Student organizations are expected to comply with all University policies and procedures when sponsoring events and programs held both on and off campus. Such events and programs must be consistent with the University’s mission, goals, values, and policies. Whether on or off campus, organization members are representatives of the University and are expected to act in a mature and responsible manner. As such, individual members, advisors, or organizations as a whole may be subject to disciplinary sanction by the Campus Activities Office for inappropriate behavior. Additionally, any damages caused by an organization or its members will be charged to the student organization and the members’ own pockets, as applicable. Refer to the “Sanctions for Student Organizations” section for additional information.

Accommodations for People with Disabilities
Accommodations for people with disabilities (e.g. sign language interpreters, additional wheelchair-accessible ramps, adequate seating for people in wheelchairs and their companions) must be made within adequate time. Such arrangements often require contracting with off-campus vendors or service providers. Student organizations are responsible for making all such arrangements and paying all applicable charges.

Alcohol Consumption and Distribution
The consumption and distribution of alcohol at student organization events must comply with the University’s “Policy on Alcohol Distribution” and with applicable civil laws. Student organizations intending to serve or distribute alcohol must submit “Alcohol Distribution Forms” to the Vice President of Student Life a minimum of three weeks prior to the proposed event in order to review specific alcohol policies. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary sanction. Refer to the “Policy on Alcohol Distribution” section for additional information.

Amplified Sound
Student Organizations are responsible for controlling the volume of noise and amplified sound to a level not exceeding the immediate boundaries of the area in which an event is held. Events occurring during class periods must not interfere with instruction. Normally, social or performance events are prohibited during regularly scheduled class periods.

Audio-visual Equipment Reservations
Student Organizations may reserve University audio-visual equipment using applicable reservation venues. Equipment is generally available on a first-come, first-served basis. Student Organizations are responsible for all damages to reserved equipment. Such damages may result in the organizations loss of audio-visual equipment reservation privileges until such time as determined by the Director of Campus Activities/University Center, or designate. Contact Media Delivery for a complete listing of available equipment and reservations.

Community Events
For social events open to off-campus guests, student organization representatives must make appointments with the Director of Campus Activities/ University Center for event approval a minimum of 14 days prior to the event. The RSO should make every effort to have its advisor present at these meetings. Student Organization representatives should be prepared to discuss proposed dates, times, locations, food and beverages to be served, admission fees, procedures for clean-up, methods of fee payments (if applicable), and risk management plans. Events open to off-campus guests may require University Police assistance.

Food Service
Sponsors of University events using University facilities and requiring food and/or beverage services must contact the University’s Campus Dining Office for an initial estimate. If an off-campus caterer quotes a lower price for a comparable meal and service, the University Campus Dining Office must be afforded the opportunity to match the quoted price and keep the catering contract
on campus. In the event that off-campus caterers are used, under no circumstances will the kitchen-dining room facilities or equipment be available for use by individuals or organizations. Off campus caterers must be an approved catering service that has a licensed kitchen with a health inspection permit.

Fundraising Projects
Refer to the “Finances” chapter for guidelines.

Hazing
Education programs for students just beginning to affiliate with student organizations, referred to as "new members," should foster personal growth and orient new members to the mission and purpose of the organization. Throughout the education program, new members maintain certain inherent rights. In order to protect those rights, the University prohibits any activity included in the new member education program that may be considered hazing. Student organizations found guilty of hazing will face suspension or loss of recognition. Among other sanctions, individuals will face possible probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Additionally, individuals and organizations engaging in hazing may be subject to fines and charged with criminal offenses. According to the Texas Education Code (Title II, Subtitle G, Chapter 37, Subchapter F, §§ 37.151 through §§ 37.157), an individual commits a hazing offense not only by engaging in a hazing activity, but also by soliciting, directing, encouraging, aiding, or attempting to aid another in hazing; by intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly allowing hazing to occur; or by failing to report in writing to the Vice President of Student Life firsthand knowledge that a hazing offense is planned or has occurred. The fact that an individual consented to or acquiesced in a hazing activity is not a defense to prosecution for hazing. Refer to the “Policy on Hazing” section for additional information.

Lectures and Performance Events
For speaking engagements and performance events, student organization representatives must make appointments with the Director of Campus Activities/University Center for event approval a minimum of 10 days prior to the event. The organization should make every effort to have its advisor present at these meetings. Student organization representatives should be prepared to discuss proposed dates, times, locations, food and beverages to be served, admission fees, procedures for clean-up, methods of fee payments (if applicable), and risk management plans. Student organizations are responsible for ensuring that speakers and entertainers comply with the University's mission, goals, and values. Speakers and entertainers must acknowledge the University is a private, Catholic institution that promotes certain communal morals and values. The University expects speakers, entertainers, and their agents to use appropriate behavior and language during speaking engagements and performance events. Particularly, speakers, entertainers, and their agents will refrain from references to abortion, abuse of alcohol and illegal or controlled substances, birth control, euthanasia, and sexual intercourse that are inconsistent with Catholic doctrine. Language and behavior that is insensitive to racial diversity and sexual orientation is intolerable. Events open to off-campus guests may require University Police assistance.

Private Parties
While the University cannot legally restrict privately organized parties at off-campus locations where alcohol will be available, student organizations are advised that such parties may not be advertised by written, verbal, or electronic means as “official” student organization events. Such parties must not have direct connections to the student organization and cannot be promoted as such, verbally, electronically, or in writing. An event is considered “official” when one or more of the following criteria apply:

1. The event was planned in a meeting of the student organization.
2. The context of the event (e.g. the presence of the student organizations officers, the presence of a significant proportion of the organizations members, publicity identifying the event) indicates that the event was the product of the organization, per se.

Prohibited Dates for Events
Student organizations are prohibited from sponsoring events during the week preceding final exams or during final exams week. This policy may be waived at the discretion of the Director of Campus Activities/University Center, or a designate. The Campus Activities Office reserves the right to limit approved event dates and to cancel events scheduled during these periods.

Publicity
All publicity (e.g. posters, fliers, table tents) must be approved by the Campus Activities Office before distribution. Such approved publicity may be posted only in designated areas. Failure to comply will result in removal of posted items and loss of advertising privileges until such time as determined by the Director of Campus Activities/University Center. Refer to the “Policy on Chalking” and the “Policy on Posting” section for additional information.

Rain Sites
For all events scheduled outdoors, student organizations should reserve an indoor rain site with comparable crowd capacity. The Campus Activities Office and Physical Plant Office should be notified with adequate time to alter locations and set-up requests due to inclement weather. Refer to the “Procedure for Facility and Room Reservations” section for additional information.
Service Projects
All student organizations must register service projects with the Center for Service-Learning and Volunteerism. “Request for Service Project Approval Forms” must be submitted no later than 14 days prior to the proposed project for consideration. Authorization will be made by the Associate Director of the Center for Service-Learning and Volunteerism, or a designate, using the following guidelines:

- Service projects must have clear purposes.
- Service projects must provide learning opportunities.
- Service projects should address community needs.
- Service projects must include actions that raise social awareness.
- Service projects must take place in safe environments.
- Service projects must be consistent with the University’s mission and Catholic teachings.
- Service projects must include reflection activities.
- Volunteers must not be used to replace paid staff.

If the student organization advisor is traveling with the organization, a travel plan should be filed with the Director of Campus Activities/University Center prior to departure. The travel plan should include the same information detailed above.

Vehicle Reservations
Student organization’s advisors may reserve University vehicles using applicable reservation forms. Vehicles are generally available on a first-come, first-served basis. Student organizations are responsible for all damages to reserved vehicles. Any negligence while using University vehicles will result in the immediate suspension of organization reservation privileges until such time as determined by the Director of Campus Activities/University Center, or a designate. In addition, the student organization’s official recognition will be jeopardized and other sanctions may apply. Refer to the “Procedure for Vehicle Reservations” section for additional information.

Planning Accessible Events
The Campus Activities Office encourages student organizations to plan events that are accessible to all members of the University community regardless of physical ability. The following are a few issues to consider in order to insure your events are accessible to all prospective audience members.

Location
- Verify the facility is accessible to people with disabilities. Is there a wheelchair ramp? Is there an elevator?
- Determine if there is adequate seating for both people in wheelchairs and their companions.
- Verify there are restrooms and water fountains that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- If applicable, verify the availability of accessible parking. Is the parking in close proximity to the event’s location?

Services
- Contact a service provider to arrange for a sign language interpreter. Ensure the interpreter has
seating with an unobstructed view of the audience. Events in large venues may require additional visual aids (closed-captioned video screens) for the interpreter to be seen.

- Designate an individual to be the contact person during the event should issues arise regarding accessibility. This person should be knowledgeable of the accommodations already in place, as well as where to turn should special needs arise during the event.

Publicity
- Evaluate the organizations methods and outlets for publicizing the event. Do they reach all members of the University community regardless of physical ability?
- Include on your publicity information about whom attendees should contact regarding accommodations for the event, such as wheelchair-accessible seating and sign language interpreters.

Talent
- Contact all talent or speakers before the event to determine if there are any accommodations that need to be made.

Planning Service Projects

There are many benefits earned through a well-planned and implemented community service project. These include enhancing team building, providing unique learning opportunities, living the University’s mission, meeting real needs in the community, building bridges on and off campus, and generating excellent publicity for your student organization.

Questions to Consider:
1. Have you contacted the Center for Service-Learning and Volunteerism to register your service project? (“Service Project Approval Forms” are available in the Center for Service-Learning and Volunteerism, Worden School)
2. Will students be excited about the project? Will it be challenging, meaningful, and valuable?
3. Does the project offer opportunities for leadership development and learning?
4. Have you set time aside for orientation, reflection, and evaluation?
5. Is there enough work for everyone to do?
6. Is the project feasible? Is the project within your resources (time, money, people, and expertise)?
7. Are special training, paperwork, and medical or background checks required? Will you need to plan transportation?
8. Will the project conflict with any other group or event on campus?
9. Is there potential to build coalitions with other campus groups? Will it be open to, or will you tap into, diverse student populations?
10. Is everyone prepared? Do the leaders know their roles and responsibilities?

Video Copyright Information

The Federal Copyright Act (Title 17 of the United States Code) governs how copyrighted materials, such as movies and videos, may be used. Neither the rental nor purchase of a videocassette carries with it the right to show the tape outside of the home.

A public performance license must be obtained to show copyrighted materials as part of an organization event. This legal requirement applies regardless of whether an admission fee is charged.

Penalties for Copyright Infringement
"Willful" infringement done for purposes of commercial or financial gain is a federal crime and is punishable as a felony, carrying a maximum sentence of up to five years in jail and/or a $250,000 fine. Even inadvertent infringers are subject to substantial civil damages, ranging from $500 to $20,000 for each illegal showing.

How to Obtain a Public Performance License
Obtaining a public performance license is relatively easy and usually requires only a phone call. Fees are determined by such factors as the number of times a particular movie will be shown and how large the audience will be. Fees are generally inexpensive for smaller performances. The following are major firms that handle licenses:
- Criterion Pictures USA, Inc.
  (847) 470-8606 x223