

PLAN AWESOME EVENTS!

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START EARLY

Event planning takes time!

Anticipate things not falling into place immediately:

- 1st choice speaker not available
- Location not available
- Need at least 2-4 weeks to publicize

Start the planning early: 8 weeks out

Event planning handout



DEVELOP A SPECIFIC, DETAILED EVENT GOAL

Example:

Bring together students from different departments in our school.

Better examples:

Bring together students from different departments in our school to facilitate scholarly exchange.

Bring together students from different departments in our school so they can meet and socialize.

Provide students with subsidized activities they can't afford on their own.

Help students build affinity with our school.

Once you have a goal, you can start to develop event ideas.

Hint: Keep them simple!



REGISTRATION

Even if your event is free, it's important to take registration.

- If you see too few are signing up, you can step up publicity efforts.
- Don't wait until the day before your event to do this.
- Can adjust the size of the room and/or the seating if necessary

You should always count on no-shows at free events, so allow more to register than you can accommodate. No show rate depends on the kind of event.

If the event requires payment, make sure you have a way to sell tickets. You need a way to secure cash too.

- When and where you sell tickets will greatly affect who attends your event.

If you print tickets, make sure to include relevant and accurate info: name of event, date, time, location, etc.



LOGISTICS

Reserve location

- There may be reservation costs as well as costs for incidentals such as technology, security, housekeeping, etc.
- 50 people in a room that holds 300 looks like a failure; 50 people in a room that holds 40 looks like a smashing success

Ask your speakers in advance what their A/V needs are. Ask to receive presentations, handouts, etc. in advance.

Arrange for transportation, laptop, LCD projector, podium, microphone, photographer, video if needed



CATERING

Be aware that there are many dietary restrictions among our diverse graduate community:

- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Pescatarian
- Lactose intolerant
- Gluten intolerant
- Food allergies
- Religious dietary laws: Islamic, Hindu, Jewish/Kosher

Make sure the food at your event reflects all these diets!!!



WALK THROUGH THE EVENT IN ADVANCE

Make a list of all the tasks that need to be done at the event, and make sure you have sufficient people to do them: handling registration, checking IDs, setting up A/V, working w/ caterer, schmoozing speaker, etc.

Physically walk through the space and make sure that everything you envisioned happening will work.

Anticipate what might go wrong and be prepared: Bring a list of vendor phone numbers (caterer, bus company, A/V company, speaker, etc.).

Walk through as a participant: What happens when you arrive? Do you have to check in? Will there be a long line? Do you have to show ID/ticket/etc? While you are waiting for the program to begin, what are you doing? If you have a question, who do you ask?



PRE-EVENT TASKS

Send reminders to speakers, vendors, participants.

Double-check room reservation and set up, catering, etc.

Print out agendas, program booklets, handouts, registration lists, etc.

Organize presentations onto jump drive.

Organize supplies to bring: printed materials, jump drive, extension cords, mac/pc connectors and chargers, name placards, nametags, markers, directional signs, tape, sign-up sheets, clipboards, scissors, etc.



DAY OF EVENT TASKS

Be at the event location in time to accept food deliveries, greet speakers, set up technology, handle early arrivers (at least 45 minutes before start of event)

Bring phone numbers for vendors, speakers, etc.

Check in participants as they arrive

Schmooze speakers and VIPs

Begin the program with welcoming remarks, in which you introduce yourself then the speaker/entertainment/etc.



POST-EVENT TASKS

Send letters or emails of thanks to your speakers; send thank you gift or honorarium

Send letters or emails of thanks to volunteers; send thank you gift or honorarium

Survey participants to get feedback on the success of your event

Disseminate meeting minutes, next steps, etc.

Update budget

Determine future actions



PENN GUIDELINES: FUNDING

You can seek funding for your events from a variety of sources:

- GAPSA Student Group funding for registered student groups:
<http://gapsa.upenn.edu/grants-funding/grants-funding-student-groups/>
- Your school
- Co-sponsorship with other Penn student groups and/or University offices
- Corporate sponsorship: Be aware of restrictions on promoting alcohol vendors, etc.



PENN GUIDELINES: CONTRACTS

You cannot sign contracts! If you do, you are personally responsible.

If you are a University-wide student organization, send your contracts to the Office of Student Affairs.


If you are a school-based student organization, send your contracts to a BA in your school.



PENN GUIDELINES: ROOM RESERVATIONS

Look for on-campus spaces through Perelman Quad, the Grad Center, your home school, etc.

Many campus facilities will waive room rental fees for student events, but there are usually other costs:

- Facility Set-Up (including podium, chairs, tables, decorations, unique configurations, etc.)
 - Technology (microphones, audio/visual systems, projectors, screens, etc.)
 - Security
 - Catering
 - Housekeeping
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PENN GUIDELINES: ALCOHOL

If you are hosting an event with alcohol:

- Your organization is responsible for adhering to all State and University regulations. You are liable for what happens.
- You cannot exchange money for alcohol in any way, shape, or form. This is a STATE LAW.



PENN GUIDELINES: ALCOHOL

If you are hosting an event with alcohol on campus, you must:

- Provide non-alcoholic beverages (and not just water)
 - Provide appropriate amounts of food
 - Have a system for ensuring that only people aged 21+ have access to alcohol
 - Hire a university-approved bartender
 - Provide security if your event involves alcohol in an open location (i.e. outdoor plaza)
 - No advertisement of alcoholic beverages shall be permitted
 - Stop serving alcohol on-campus by 1AM; event may continue until 2AM
 - Properly dispose of partially filled and empty alcohol containers
 - NO kegs on campus!
 - Think carefully before serving hard liquor....we really discourage it
 - Have a plan for dealing with intoxicated persons
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