

Event Planning

RSO Advisor Development Series

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Where to Start?

The Initial Planning Stages

Initial Planning

- First, help your students decide **WHY** they want to hold an event
 - To gain publicity on campus?
 - To recruit new members?
 - To spread awareness about a cause?
 - To have something big to work towards as a group?
 - To celebrate?
 - To showcase a culture or tradition?
 - To bring students together socially?

2 months or
more prior to
event

Initial Planning

- Once they have decided WHY they want to host an event, help them determine their **TARGET AUDIENCE**
 - Determining a target audience will give you a reasonable estimate of attendees
 - Makes it easier to select a venue to accommodate guests
 - Drives the marketing plan for advertising the event

2 months or
more prior to
event

Initial Planning

- **Initial Budget**
 - How much money does the RSO have to work with initially?
 - What will the biggest expenses be?
 - Plan for unexpected expenses
 - Is this event realistically feasible?
- Is there a possibility to supplement this budget?
 - Event ticket sales
 - Sponsorships / donations
 - Supplemental fundraisers
 - ASG Funding

2 months or
more prior to
event

Form a Planning Committee

- You as the advisor should advise the planning, but not be responsible for planning everything
- Select a committee chair to delegate duties and ensure that progress is being made
- Members of the committee should be responsible for significant aspects of planning and not simply given tasks or “busy work” to complete

2 months or
more prior to
event

A Sample Committee

- Committee Chair – responsible for oversight of others and for keeping the budget and signing any contracts.
- Member 1 – Publicity / advertising
- Member 2 – Logistics / equipment for event
- Member 3 – Food / catering
- Member 4 – Primary contact with venue
- Member 5 – Primary contact with performers, speakers, etc.
- All members – Contribute to the content of the event
- *The committee should meet regularly to discuss progress!*

Helping Students Delegate

Task	Expected Results	Person Delegated To	Checkpoints	Progress Notes

Committee Delegation

- As the Advisor, keep in contact with the Committee Chair
- You may need to remind the Committee Chair to keep tabs on other members' progress
 - Don't let them give other students a task and then only check back to see if it is complete a few days before the event
- Committee should give regular reports on progress to the RSO at general meetings

Logistics

Working with Performers, Speakers, Etc.

- Contact them well in advance – timeline will depend on how in-demand they are
- Consider – Possible speaker fees, travel & lodging costs
- Many will have you sign a contract – read carefully, especially on cancellation policies
- With performers, discuss alcohol / drug policies in advance and your expectations for this at the event

2 months or
more prior to
event

Venue

- Budgetary concerns
 - Room rental fee?
 - Equipment / technician fees?
 - Set-up / clean-up fees? (Could be a hidden cost)
 - Security fees? (Could be a hidden cost)
- Size
 - Will this fit everyone? Or is it too large?
 - Fire code and security concerns
- Location
 - On-campus vs. off-campus
 - Student accessibility
 - Are non-students welcome?

2 months or
more prior to
event

Catering

- Union
 - Chartwell's is required only at the Union.
 - Specially priced menu for RSOs.
 - Other popular Fayetteville caterers:
 - Jimmy Johns
 - Whole Hog Café
 - Powerhouse Seafood & Grill
 - Chick-Fil-A Party Trays
 - AQ Chicken House
 - Qdoba Mexican Grill

Common Venues – On-campus

- The Union
 - Meeting rooms, Verizon Ballroom, Connections Lounge, Union Theatre, Multicultural Center
 - Rooms are free to reserve
 - Charges apply for some equipment, technicians, cleaning fees, etc
 - Security assessment by UAPD may be required
 - Only caterer that may be used in Union is Chartwell's
- Other popular on-campus locations:
 - Inn at Carnall Hall, Reynolds Center, Greek Theater, Tyson
 - Consult Building Reservation Guide (*See handout*)

Common Venues – Off-Campus

- Fayetteville Town Center
- Walton Arts Center
- School of Continuing Education and Academic Outreach
- Event Place (Wedington)
- Arkansas Music Pavilion (AMP)
- Fayetteville parks
- Hog Haus Meeting Room
- Crystal Bridges (museum members)

Publicity and Advertising

Consult the **Publicity Checklist**

- Posters / flyers – PMC in the Union can print these
- Table tents – In dining halls and in the Union
- Campus calendar – events.uark.edu
- Newswire – Do a pre-event story a few days before event
- Sidewalk chalking
- RIB TV
- KXUA Radio
- Contact relevant academic departments
- Traveler Ads
- Direct invitations
- Facebook
- Events listserv

Start 2-3
weeks prior
to event

Finalizing the Event

Do a Facility Walk Through

- Bring a schedule for the event, including pre-event and post-event for the day of the event
- Your committee chair, as many members of the committee as possible, and the advisor (if possible) should do the walk-through
- Discuss roles/responsibilities of each person for the event itself
- Figure out if there is anything missing / any unexpected costs
- Risk Management

2-3 weeks
prior to
event

At the Walk Through...

- Take note of:
 - Electrical outlets
 - Are they providing extension cords, or should you purchase some?
 - Facility expectations for set-up / clean-up
 - Sound system and lighting
 - Entrances/exits
 - How will you prevent bottle-necking?
 - Is there a credential or ticketing system for entering?
 - Where are emergency exits?
 - Where will security be stationed?
 - Paths for crowd flow
 - Especially if food will be served buffet-style

Final Review Before Event

- Make sure all members of the RSO understand their roles
- Don't overstaff or understaff any particular area
- Give members some input as to their roles; don't just assign duties
- Give out a detailed schedule (like a "timing sheet")
- Include cell phone numbers of Planning Committee for last minute questions / problems

5-7 days
prior to
event

Post-Event

Follow Up

- Just because the event is over, doesn't mean responsibilities are over
- Emphasize good relationships with supporters
 - Encourage students to send thank-you cards to donors, etc.

Finances

- Take care of any invoices that come in post-event
- Look at the final budget
 - Any over-expenditures?

De-Briefing

- Advisors – Meet with Officers and/or Planning Committee
- Discuss what went right with the event
- Discuss anything that did not meet expectations and why

More Resources for Students

- Event Planning Consultations with the Office of Student Activities
- Available for ANY event, not just ASG-funded
- Students can email rso@uark.edu to schedule

Questions?