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!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Expected Results</th>
<th>Person Delegated To</th>
<th>Checkpoints</th>
<th>Progress Notes</th>
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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?