

Falcon Facts

Programming Basics 101

The success or failure of a program is largely determined by the behind-the-scenes work that occurs early in the planning stages. Through foresight and organization, groups can successfully implement programs by eliminating unwanted headaches and problems. The following outline offers a guide to the programming basics.....

Program Development

Establish a Committee

Assess your committee and the student body

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to go?
- How can we get there from here?
- Survey the student body! What are their needs?

Brainstorm

- Generate a list of ideas, themes, programs, etc. and record them
- Prioritize this list. (use the sticker method)
- Break down your goals into smaller steps

Set the goals of the program, event, or activity

- What is the purpose of the program?
- Is it intended to be educational or entertaining?
- Who is your targeted audience?
- Are you fundraising?
- Will there be co-sponsor(s)?

Determine committee's finances and budget accordingly

Discuss the options with your group to determine whether you are funding the program on your own, with the University Activities Organization or with other campus organizations. Develop a detailed budget outline for each event.

Do your homework

- Check the references of the performer and agent
- Consider all hidden costs, such as hotel, meals, transportation, etc.....
- Will the event conflict with another event on campus? Check the Master Calendar

Program Planning

Once a program is decided upon it is time to bang out the nitty gritty details of the event. You should work very closely with your advisor during this stage. Here are some key points that must be considered, so that nothing is overlooked.

Pick a date, time and location

- Decide with your committee and advisor at least three dates to have the program and prioritize them.
- This will help you to negotiate dates with agents if your first date is booked
- Find a location to conduct the program on campus by using the R.O.C.'s sheet
- After your audience attendance is projected, determine the needs of your audience such as chairs, tables, lighting, sound, stage, open space, etc.....
- Will food be served? If so, determine what kind of food is needed and make all the necessary arrangements by contacting campus catering at least two weeks prior to the event.
- Set-up, fill out room diagrams indicating table and chair set-up. Return to appropriate office.
- Security; social events with an expected attendance of 150 or more require security. Campus police is the final authority as to whether security is necessary.
- Parking and traffic – request parking passes for performer(s) and equipment vehicles.

Contracts and Advanced Information

- Be careful NOT to verbally commit to any performer without first consulting with your advisor. You may not request a contract without first receiving your advisor's permission. Only advisors are authorized to advance information. The Assistant Dean of Students is the only one authorized to sign contracts for the University Activities Organization.
- Confirm approval from your organizational advisor

Event Preparation

As the date of your event draws near do not forget to make sure all the necessary loose ends are tied up. Last minute challenges and problems may occur and you must be ready for it.

Publicity

- Promotion and marketing of an event can be the difference between success and disaster. Here's a few tips to plan a promotion strategy to ensure you get the word out.
- Use a variety of promotional techniques
- Set-up a timetable for promotion
- Design publicity strategies for targeted audiences. (commuters, first years, freshman, upperclassmen, majors, etc.)
- Design your publicity to fit the motif of the event
- Make sure all the appropriate information is accurate, neat, and clearly visible at least three weeks prior to the event.

Set Itinerary

- Know times and locations for arrivals, departures, activities, and meals

Quick Example

Three weeks before event:

Are hotel, restaurant or catering reservations necessary?
Have the production requests been submitted?
Have you spoken with campus police to make security arrangements
Have you received all advanced information from your advisor
Publicity campaign
Get check cut from the Accounts Payable office for the performer

Two weeks before event:

Do you have a set-up and clean-up crew
Is the agenda for the day of event completed
Are evaluation forms drafted and photocopied
Cash box arrangements
Decorations for venue

The day of show:

Make arrangements for a brief introduction
Arrive early so that you may check to see if everything is properly set-up
Have check for performer ready to go after performance is completed
Pass out and collect evaluations to audience

One week after show:

Have evaluation of program completed

Evaluation

This is the time to review your plan to see how well it worked out.

Questions to answer when writing an evaluation report are:

- What were the goals of the program?
- How were the goals of the program accomplished?
- Was publicity effective? Why or why not?
- Recommendations for the future
- How long did the planning of this program take?
- What could be changed to make the program run smoother or improve it for the future?
- List all contacts including this information: first name, last name, phone number, address, fax number.
- List important details, special supplies, location options, etc.
- Evaluate your committee meetings
- Evaluate your committee members