

# Planning a Mississippi College Student Organization Event

There are basics you'll need to think about when planning an MC event...this document is designed to help you think through every aspect of planning events for your student organization.

## Audience (The Who)

- Who is my **audience** for this event?
  - Is it the entire campus (how many people usually attend an event like this)?
  - Is it a sub-population of campus?
  - How big is the audience?
  - Am I trying to feed everyone?
  - Am I trying to give something away to everyone there?
- Audience affects EVERYTHING below, including when you have it, where you have it, what food is served to what you can give away, etc.

## Date & Time (The When)

- What is the **date** for my event? What else will be going on on this date? What is the **day of the week**? How might this day of the week have implications you might not immediately think about? For example:
  - Monday night: Campus ministry meetings
  - Tuesday night: club & tribe meetings
  - Wednesday night: church (events are not approved between 6 pm and 9 pm on Wednesday evenings)
  - Friday night or Saturday: students often leave for the weekend- so will my event encourage students to stay over the weekend?
- What is the **time** for my event?
  - Will classes be going on?
  - Is there a meal, so it'll need to be at a certain time?

## Location

- Where is this event going to happen? Inside? Outside? On-campus or off?
  - On-campus outside
    - There's some great options for events outside on campus: Piazza, Quad, Caf Patio, Caf Back Patio, Pedestrian Street, The Bowl, Jennings Courtyard, Sand Volleyball court, MCC Courtyard, Jefferson Street (brick streets), fieldhouse deck and more
  - On-campus inside

- Anything above the caf (Anderson Hall, President's Boardroom) will require that you use Campus Dining for food (NO exceptions)
- Alumni Gym, New Men's Rotunda, Lower Commons, Swor Auditorium, Aven Theater: these are all options for inside on-campus events, but some may not allow food
- Off-campus events
  - You can consider an off campus venue, but you'll want to consider:
    - Will students come to this location for an event?
    - Will a rental fee seriously affect my budget?
    - What other stipulations may the venue have?

### Reserving Space For Your Event

Once you know the date, time and location, you need to make a reservation if it's an on-campus event. You'll need to think about items you need from Physical Plant (see below).

- Follow the steps for making reservations for student events on the MC Student Engagement website: <https://www.mc.edu/students/organizations/resources>
- Don't forget to also think about other reservations that might need to be made:
  - Road closures (on campus or in Olde Towne Clinton)
  - Parking space requests
  - Noise ordinances (for large concerts or brick street events)
  - Use of Latimer House

### What do I need for the event?

- Make a list of what you'll need for the event. Think about EVERYTHING. When it comes to the supplies you'll need... think about it in three different groups:
  - Event Services/Physical Plant Items** (these are items we'll need to request when we reserve the space)
    - Tables (8 foot long tables- round tables and shorter tables are not available). We do have a few 6 foot tables in Student Experience.
    - Chairs
    - Trash cans (think about what kind of trash the event is going to generate. Example: cupcake rappers & napkins vs. paper plates, napkins, cups and plastic silverware from a meal replacement).
    - Outdoor gas heaters
  - Items Your Organization Owns or You Own:** Think about what items your organization may own or that your members may own that you could use at your event
  - Things We May Need to Buy:** It's possible you'll need to buy some things like table cloths, specific decorations, plasticware and other items. Think through what you'll need to buy and see if your budget allows for it.

## Food

- Are you providing food at this event? Will the food be a meal, refreshments, just beverages, a desert?
  - Think through what your budget allows as far as food and refreshments
  - Is food necessary, or do you think it'll help get people to your event?

## Entertainment

- Entertainment can range from background music to a DJ to a band to a balloon artist and beyond. Think about what you're trying to accomplish with the entertainment.
  - Is it meant to compliment the event as something in the background?
  - Is it literally supposed to BE the event- like a DJ IS the event for a dance party.
  - Should it compliment the atmosphere? A face painter adds to the carnival feel of a carnival, etc.
  - VENDORS: You may be hiring a company to do something or provide something for your event (Example: blow-up obstacle course or company that provides some kind of service).
    - 1. Get a quote from them in writing.
    - 2. Consult the Office of Student Engagement to see if you need assistance with purchasing for this type of thing

## Budget

- Look back at what you need to purchase, what food you will need and what entertainment you are wanting to consider how it affects your bottom line- the budget!
  - If a quote comes in high, look at other options or vendors. It may be that you can do a smaller version (on your own) compared to paying a company to do it.
  - If you're over budget, think about how you could decrease food or go with a cheaper vendor.
  - If you're under budget, think about what is something you could do to make your event really memorable with the extra money. Example: Stickers to give away or maybe even a limited number of t-shirts.

## Graphics / Social Media / Posters / Event Art

- How are you going to tell people about this event?
  - Example: Just social media; OR social media and posters on campus; OR everything (social media, posters, email, etc.
- What do you want the feel or vibe to be for your graphics? This is something you need to think about EARLY ON so you have time to get there with edits, etc.
- Social Media Graphics
  - What do you need? Example: Story, Feed post, both, etc.

- You may consider other types of advertising/art such as yard signs, banners, etc. These things take time to complete, get ordered, etc. So think about this stuff EARLY and communicate with vendors about these EARLY.

### **Plan It Out**

- Do whatever you need to do to plan out the details and lay out the information for your event. Use Docs or Sheets to put in information and stay organized!
- Use Pinterest to plan out how you want things to look. Think about the DETAILS. It's good to draw / lay out/ write out a description of how you want the event to look visually, as well as the experience that you want students to have at the event.
- Use the maps of campus venues- these will help you plan!

### **Purchases**

- It is likely you'll need to make purchases for your event, whether that's decorations, supplies for signs, or general items.
- Consult the Student Organization Handbook for purchasing policies.
- Talk to the Office of Student Engagement or your advisor if you need help with specific purchasing

### **Thinking about the Day-Of (Or Possibly the Day-Of and the Day Before)**

- What time will set-up need to begin?
- Will things need to be done the day before?
- How many people will you need for set-up?
- Are there certain errands or pick-ups that will need to be done on the day-of? Consider who should help with these.
- What kind of assignments will need to be made for those helping with the event for both set-up and during your event?
- Think about tear down and clean-up of your event. Do you need to make specific assignments?
- Do you have enough help to pull off this event? If not, maybe consider scaling back. If you have enough people, make sure they're aware of your expectations and what they'll need to do!
- Think about food and how it will be served? What is the most efficient way to do this? More than one line? Will people be serving the food or will people serve themselves?

### **During the Event**

- There are certain things you'll need to think about as the event goes on. You may need to adapt as the event goes on or may need to cut or add things as needed. Things to be thinking about:
  - Watch trash cans. If they get full, empty them and take the trash to a dumpster on campus.

- Think about music volume- if it's a chill event, the music shouldn't be so loud that people can't have conversations.
- Make sure food, giveaways and anything else are refilled as needed. Adjust table displays so they still look full, etc.
- Keep in mind the temperature of food. Is it supposed to be hot, is it still hot? Is it supposed to be cold?
- Refill drinks in coolers regularly

### **After the Event**

- It's easy to think the work is done once the event is over... but there's still plenty to think about.
  - Update your budget and track your spending. Make sure all receipts are turned in to your organization's financial point person.
  - Put everything away (wherever it may belong) and finish well!
  - Assess your event- talk to your organization and decide what you could do better next time. Consider:
    - What could be done better if this event happens again in the future?
    - What went really well about this event that we could duplicate in the future?
    - What did not go well about this event?
    - What advice would you give to someone planning this event in the future?