



ECSU Student Center and Student Activities Office *Co-curricular education for student organizational leadership*

PROGRAMMING BASICS

You are planning a lecture, 100 people are waiting at the door, and there are only 10 chairs in the room. What went wrong? Programming can be a tricky proposition that can catch you off guard if the big picture isn't considered. This sheet describes everything you ever wanted to know about programming, step by step.

PROGRAM CONCEPT

The first thing you must do is decide what type of program you are going to do:

- ◆ Determine the goals of the program. Examples: to bring a community together, to educate, to expose individuals to different points of view, to support other programs, to provide entertainment, to provide opportunities, to socialize, etc.
- ◆ Brainstorm the type of program and possible themes that will match your program goals (examples: speaker, film, dance, fund raisers, trip, food, festival, athletic event, recreation tournament, quiz bowl contests, etc.).
- ◆ Decide on a program within your budget. Discuss the options within your group and make a group decision.

PROGRAM PLANNING

Once you decide on a program, it is then time to work out the details. Following are the vital points to make sure nothing is overlooked!

- ◆ **Date**
 - ◆ Consult the Calendar of Events (can be obtained at the Student Center Information Desk).
 - ◆ Find a convenient date for members in the group.
 - ◆ Check on facility availability.
- ◆ **Location**
 - ◆ Project the attendance.
 - ◆ Determine the program needs (chairs, tables, lighting, sound, stage, open space, cooking area, ticket booths, etc.)
- ◆ **Time**

Determine a convenient time for a targeted audience. For example, commuter students are on campus during the day so plan a time between day classes for a program. Do not plan a program when a major event or large, required meeting (i.e., Executive Council) is scheduled.
- ◆ **Budget**
 - ◆ Project all expenses and income.
 - ◆ Stay on budget.
 - ◆ Brainstorm additional funding sources.
- ◆ **Entertainment**
 - ◆ Determine the type of entertainment.
 - ◆ Research local, regional, and national possibilities.
 - ◆ Contact and negotiate a price.

- ◆ **Food**
 - ◆ Determine food needs and design a menu.
 - ◆ Make arrangements.

- ◆ **Publicity**
 - ◆ Design publicity strategies for targeted audiences.
 - ◆ Be creative.
 - ◆ Put publicity up in ample time for people to plan ahead.
 - ◆ Design your promotion to fit the style and theme of the program (i.e., educational, serious, festive, informational, etc.)
 - ◆ Make the publicity neat and accurate. Be sure to proof your publicity before printing it! Mistakes can be embarrassing and they look unprofessional.

- ◆ **Other Things**

Cover all aspects of the program. Additional possibilities include travel arrangements, lodging, postage, decorations, cleanup, security, and volunteers.

PROGRAM IN MOTION

Once the details are worked out, it's time to set the program in motion. Following are steps to consider for a successful program:

- ◆ **Backward Plan**

Develop a list of tasks that need to occur before, during, and after the event and determine who is responsible (i.e., ushers, cleanup crew, stage crew, etc.). Begin at the end of the event and determine the amount of time needed for each task and work backward. You are less likely to forget details this way.

- ◆ **Register the Event if off campus**

Stop in the Student Activities Office and complete an "Off-Campus Event" form (must be done at least 72 hours prior to event, preferably as soon as you know).

- ◆ **Day of Program**
 - ◆ Come early to check on room arrangements and set up.
 - ◆ Prepare a brief introduction statement. For example, "Welcome to tonight's performance. We are proud and honored to present this event. If you are interested in having more events like this one, please talk to a representative of our organization."

- ◆ **Evaluate the Program (at next meeting)**
 - ◆ Determine if you have accomplished your program goals.
 - ◆ Record results (positive and/or negative) for future planning.
 - ◆ Prepare a financial statement of actual expenditures and revenue.
 - ◆ Send thank you notes to appropriate people.

RELATED SAO RESOURCES

- ◆ Financial Resources for Student Organizations
- ◆ Promotion and Publicity Ideas
- ◆ Successful Campus Promotion

REFERENCE

Adapted from: St. Norbert College, Department of Leadership, Service & Involvement

*Additional resource handouts are available as well as consultation services.
For more information, contact the Student Activities Office in the Student Center at 465-4450.*