

Meet with your fellow conference coordinators to discuss the following:

Coordinate the Committee:

- Assign special areas of responsibility to specific members of your committee.
- Develop a timeline unique to your event.
- Delegate one person to act as a liaison between your group and Conference Services.
- Contact the Office of Conference Services.
- Begin pre-conference meetings.

Strategize Your Event:

- Determine the objectives of the event.
- Choose an event theme.
- Establish a preliminary budget.
- Select a date(s) and a tentative schedule for your event (being mindful of federal, state, and religious holidays as well as academic calendar important dates).
- Establish deadlines for planning.

Structure the Program of Your Event:

- Secure speakers and make their travel arrangements.
- Estimate the number of participants.
- Contact the campus caterer.
- Develop a preliminary guest list and/or target audience.
- Secure facilities.

Market Your Event:

- Create a marketing plan.
- Obtain publishing/advertising deadlines.
- Produce a design for any printed materials to submit to Conference Services for review and approval process.

Remember, this first planning stage is the most crucial in planning a successful event.

Six to Nine Months Prior to Your Event

The following expectations should be met during this planning period:

Evaluate Your Facility and Lodging Concerns:

- Determine the lodging needs of your participants.
- Review room reservation information provided by Conference Services.
- Select meeting room types (e.g. theater, classroom).

Evaluate Program Details:

- Review your program objectives and make any necessary adjustments.
- Assess food and beverage menus and the caterer's service terms.
- Order special menus (e.g. Kosher, vegetarian).
- Finalize participant mailing list.
- Confirm speakers and presenters by letter, obtain AV needs, biographies, and abstracts.
- Confirm conference rates and budget.
- Create hospitality arrangements (e.g. VIP guests, presenters).

Organize Necessary Materials:

- Organize mailing lists and arrange mailing procedures such as addressing envelopes and postage requirements for bulk mail.
- Review registration materials and brochures with Conference Services, making final changes and sending brochure to printers.
- Select and order gifts for attendees and speakers.
- Purchase other necessary materials (e.g. nametags, folders, pens, etc.).
- Contact a PR representative from the University.

Re-Evaluate Your Work:

- Check with Conference Services concerning the management of registration and RSVP's, confirmations, tickets, and nametags.
- Produce contingency plans to satisfy unexpected emergencies.
- Schedule "trial runs" of your event with the committee from the perspective of your guests and evaluate problems.
- Continue with pre-conference meetings.
- Review and adjust budget.

One to Three Months Prior to Your Event

During this stage of planning, your committee should be finishing the smaller details of the event as well as reaching final major deadlines.

Finalize Facility and Program Requirements:

- Confirm all catering arrangements (e.g. menu, set-ups, and times).
- Examine technical needs such as access to multimedia devices, special set-ups, or equipment.
- Confirm the speakers' AV needs.
- Compose a copy of the program and send it to the printer.

Finalize Material and Marketing Needs:

- Brochures received from printer.
- Address and mail invitations and brochures (6-8 weeks out).
- Continue to work with the Office of Public Relations to advertise and promote your event.
- Determine confirmation materials for participants.
- Receive any handouts from speakers.

Confirm Conference Strategies:

- Continue with pre-conference briefing meeting(s).
- Identify any materials not previously purchased.
- Review the budget.

One to Two Weeks Prior to Your Event

Review Final Details:

- Finalize all itineraries.
- Schedule briefings and/or rehearsals with all speakers, presenters, and coordinators.
- Finalize guest count for caterers.
- Complete table assignments and place cards for formal meals.
- Send out final press alerts to media.
- Organize final pre-conference meeting with all conference personnel and staff.

Implement Final Tasks:

- Collect emergency telephone numbers and compile a list.
- Make signs (e.g. for directions, parking, breakout sessions).
- Compare all room set-ups against registration counts.
- Assemble conference packets.

One to Three Days Prior to Your Event

At this stage, most of the main objectives have been met, leaving only smaller details to confirm.

Finalize and Confirm Details:

- Update both registration and rooming information.
- Review all signs for clarity.
- Review the final room set-up plans.
- Obtain all necessary keys.
- Assemble participant and speaker gifts.
- Schedule one last "trial run" to identify potential problems.
- Reproduce multiple copies of all written lists, plans, emergency numbers, schedules, and staff assignments for easy reference.
- Verify all final changes.
- Run all name badges.

Day of Check-in/During Your Event

- Place signs.
- Submit all expenses to Conference Services.
- Assign conference and facility coordinators to check meeting room set-ups.
- Place table numbers and place cards according to the pre-determined seating charts, if necessary.
- Act as a liaison between your group's members and the Conference Services representative by notifying them with questions, concerns, and recommendations.

Two to Four Weeks Following Event

- Meet with committee for evaluation session.
- Finalize income and expenses.
- Compile and process evaluation forms.
- Send thank you's (e.g. speakers, volunteers)