Event Planning Guide for Registered Student Organizations

Initial Planning Phase

- [ ] **What is the purpose and flow of the event? What do you hope attendees get out of it?**
    - If this event has been done in the past, review post-event documents as you're developing your plan.
    - Consider how this event would support the mission of your organization.
    - Approach your event planning with a <u>universal design</u> perspective.
- [ ] **How are you organizing your planning process?**
    - Develop a thorough event plan document that could be used by someone that doesn't know anything about the event to run it themselves, and make sure it's stored in one location (like BOX or Google Drive) along with any other event documents.
- [ ] **Have you determined a date and time?**
    - Check to make sure it won't conflict with other major campus or community events, religious holidays, or busy academic periods (i.e., test week).
        - Consult with your advisor
        - Academic Calendar: https://auburn.edu/main/auweb_calendar.php
        - Auburn University Events Calendar: https://calendar.auburn.edu
        - A-O Tourism Calendar: https://www.aotourism.com/Calendar/
        - Interfaith Calendar: https://www.interfaith-calendar.org
- [ ] **How many people do you expect to attend?**
- [ ] **What is your event budget?**
    - Consult with your organization's financial officer and/or advisor to confirm available funds and proposed budget.
    - *Is your organization sponsored by an on-campus department?* Any purchase of $5,000 or higher must be submitted as a Purchase Order a minimum of two weeks in advance of the event date. Work with your advisor for this.
        - With a Purchase Order it requires an additional set of approvals through University Officials. Work with your advisor on the appropriate timeline for when this paperwork should be processed before the event occurs.

- Any professional service (i.e., photobooth company, live band, guest speaker, performer, etc.) at a cost of $600 or higher requires a Professional Services Contract. Work with your advisor for this.

☐ **Where do you want to host the event?**
- See the reservations section in the Organization Manual for suggested locations and instructions on making reservations on campus.
- If outdoors, reserve an indoor rain location.
- Remember to include set-up and tear-down time in your reservation request. The start time for the reservation should be the time you want to have access to the space to begin setting up.

☐ **What do you want the layout of the event to look like?**
- Draw exactly what you want on a diagram of the event space to help visualize the setup and flow.

☐ **Do you want to have any vendors? (band/DJ, catered food, entertainment, guest speaker, dunk tank, bouncy house, florist, etc.)**
- Consult with your advisor to complete necessary paperwork at least one month (preferably sooner) in advance of the event.
- If you're having something like a bouncy house or physically rigorous activity, are there other activities happening simultaneously for attendees who may not be able or want to participate in that activity?
- If your event is primarily a speaking engagement, you may need to provide a sign language interpreter and/or captioning.

☐ **Will you have food or beverages? If so, how will it be provided?**
- Options include:
  - Catering – food provider staff remain on-site serving food
  - Delivery – food provider drops food at your event and leaves
  - Store Bought – someone purchases food ahead of time for the event
- If purchasing beverages beforehand with a University Purch Purchasing Card or by a University Department via invoice, they must be Coke products (i.e., Dasani water) because that is Auburn's preferred vendor.
- If food is being catered, the vendor must be registered as a vendor with Auburn University and may be required to provide a Certificate of Insurance, Vendor Agreement Form, or other documentation. Work with your advisor to submit necessary paperwork.

- A good practice is to avoid all nut-based foods including peanuts, tree nuts etc.
- Ensure caterers can provide vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, Kosher, and Halal meal options.
- Refer to Auburn University's [Food Safety and Handling Guide](#) to ensure you're remaining within guidelines.

☐ **Do you want music at your event?**
- If you plan to have amplified sound (i.e., music on a loudspeaker, live music, etc.), submit a permit request for approval at least 10 days prior to the event (https://web.auburn.edu/facilities/tentsoundreq/sound.aspx).
- Contact WEGL if you want them to DJ your event (cost associated).

☐ **Will the event require any special parking or transportation?**
- Email parking@auburn.edu to ask permission for attendees to park in the Hayfield or Intramural Fields lots.
- Reserve Tiger Transit buses for mass transportation.
- Consult your advisor to work through these logistics.

☐ **Do you want Aubie to make an appearance?**
- Request form: https://www.auburn.edu/student_info/student_life/aubie/request.php

☐ **What is the marketing plan?**
- Promote your event to the student body well in advance in a variety of ways.
- Do you want any promotional items or printed materials such as t-shirts, buttons, water bottles, signage, customized name tags, banners, etc.?
- Work with your organization's marketing team from the beginning stages of event planning, so they can help you build a comprehensive plan.

☐ **Who is your target audience? Who might you need to send a special invitation to prior to general advertising?**
- Consider reaching out to specific academic majors that could have a related interest to a component of your event.

☐ **Do you have a paragraph description of your event that can be used for advertising?**
- Potential locations:
  - Social Media captions
  - Newsletter blurbs (Auburn News, This Week at AU, etc.)

☐ **How can students sign up to attend? Will you require an RSVP?**
   o AUinvolve has an RSVP feature for events and even includes a waitlist option. You can add customized questions for attendees to answer when they RSVP.
      ▪ Allow attendees to give their pronouns.
      ▪ Securely gather information on accommodations and dietary restrictions, if necessary.

☐ **Have you added the event to AUinvolve? Does it also need to be added to CEPS?**
   o If your event meets one or more of these criteria, you should <u>work with your advisor 30-90 days in advance</u> of the event date to submit it for approval to the **C**ampus **E**vent **P**lanning **S**ystem:
      1. Events or meetings on campus with over 100 attendees
      2. Attendees, participants, and/or invitees include individuals who are not university students, faculty, or staff
      3. Involves one or more outside vendors, contractors, or exhibitors (e.g., caterers who stay and serve food buffet style), DJ/band that is not a student, party rental companies)
      4. Involves minors, as participants or attendees in any capacity
      5. Involves group physical or other high-risk activities (e.g., run/walk events, interactive games, swing dancing, yoga, exercise of any kind, carnival games, attractions, or rides)
      6. Certificate of Insurance and possibly a waiver will be required
      7. Involves the service and/or consumption of alcohol at an on-campus location *(Alcohol is not allowed at Student Involvement sponsored events)*

Preparation Phase

☐ **Will your event require public safety/security staff or participants to sign a release waiver?**
   o Depending on the number of attendees, you may be required to have public safety officers or hired security at your event.
   o If you are collecting cash (ticket sales, donations, etc.), you are required to have a public safety officer present. The cost is $43 per hour per officer.

- o   Any activities that could be considered dangerous (i.e., strenuous physical activity, bouncy house, using tools or machinery, carnival rides, etc.) will require a waiver.
- o   Consult with your advisor to obtain the necessary personnel and/or documents.

☐ **Can you do a walk-through of the venue beforehand? (at least 1-2 weeks in advance)**
- o   Check where outlets are located and consider potential need for extension cords.
- o   Consider where you might need to post directional or identifying signage.
- o   Ensure physical accessibility
    - ▪   Are ramps and elevators available and nearby to the event location?
    - ▪   Could people of all body sizes fit comfortably?
    - ▪   How can you communicate accessible parking options?
- o   Ensure comfort for those sensitive to light, sound, etc.
- o   Be aware of harmful imagery present (statues, flags, etc.).
- o   Locate the nearest Automated External Defibrillator (AED) device, in case of emergency.
- o   Plan for accommodations even without being explicitly asked.

☐ **What type of equipment, technology, or supplies will you need?**
- o   Consider things such as but not limited to tents, tables (round or rectangular), tablecloths, chairs, microphones, clicker, walkie talkies, clipboards, name tags, masks, sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, First Aid kits, photobooth, camera, balloons, scissors, pens, highlighters, decorations.
- o   Plan to use a microphone and ensure all speakers utilize it throughout the event. We should not assume everyone can hear effectively, even if the speaker has a "loud" voice.
    - ▪   If you ask, "Can everyone hear me?" – How can the person who can't hear you let you know they can't hear you?
    - ▪   If it's not possible for everyone to speak into the microphone, have the person with the mic summarize or repeat back what the speaker said for the audience.
- o   If showing videos, ensure subtitles are available and turned on in advance.

☐ **Have you confirmed setup details, equipment needs, and event diagram with Student Center Reservations, vendors, and/or guest presenters?**
- Prepare external contributors (speakers, facilitators, etc.) with norms of accessibility and inclusion.
  - Speak clearly (ideally facing forward without covering your mouth)
  - Avoid acronyms and colloquialisms as much as possible
  - When addressing someone specifically, ask for his/her/their name and pronouns to confirm
  - Specify when you're finished speaking

☐ **Is your event set up to be accessible, welcoming, and inclusive to all Auburn students?**
- Here is a [helpful guide](helpful%20guide) to increase accessibility at your event.
- We should not have a "check list" mentality when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Focus on the ongoing process and continuous improvement, knowing we're never going to be perfect.
- While DEI oftentimes requires extra effort, we are losing a lot more if we don't create inclusive environments where all students feel like they can't reach their full potential.
- Consider how people with various identities will respond to your event. Will they feel welcome to attend, included when they arrive, and fulfilled as a result of attending?
  - This is not an exhaustive list, but to get your brain flowing, imagine how you might experience your event if you use a wheelchair, are sensitive to light, use a listening device, wear a size 3x, are an international student, are a first-generation student, are from a rural community, were raised poor, are Jewish, experience depression and anxiety, are Latina, are a 27-year old veteran student, LGBTQ+, have a service animal, are on the Autism spectrum, etc.
  - Oftentimes, marginalized identities are overlooked or not considered in the event planning process. By making an intentional effort to consider marginalized identities, you're prioritizing a more inclusive environment for all students.

- [ ] **How are you communicating to attendees prior to the event?**
  - How can you help them know where to go, what to expect when they arrive, appropriate attire, what to bring with them, etc.?
  - Share content and/or trigger warnings ahead of time to attendees, if applicable.
    - Use of flash photography or any strobe lights/flashing images that may cause seizures
    - Distinctly amplified sound/music
    - Use of fog machines or any other chemicals/smells that may make your space inaccessible to individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) or Idiopathic Environmental Intolerances (IEI)
- [ ] **What is the "day of timeline" for the event?**
  - Time, Action/What's Happening, Where, Who's Responsible, Notes
  - Consider writing a script for speaking roles, such as a welcome, Indigenous Land Acknowledgement, announcements, instructions, or other components of the event.
  - Think about how far in advance you'll want to start setting up the event and plan for buffer time!
  - Review this information with members of your organization and the event team at a meeting prior to the event, so everyone is knowledgeable and prepared.
  - Remember to check-in at the Foy Desk on the 2nd floor of Melton Student Center to access the room (if the event is in that building) and avoid a fee.
- [ ] **How will you track attendance? What is the check-in process for attendees?**
  - Student organizations are highly encouraged to track attendance on AUinvolve, and the "Check-In" app is the recommended way to do this.
  - Review Student Involvement's attendance check-in resources for options.
- [ ] **Do you need event volunteers? How are you communicating instructions to them?**
- [ ] **Should you create a post event survey? How are you intentionally gathering feedback and assessing the event?**
  - Qualtrics is Auburn University's preferred platform for surveys. Work with your advisor to develop and publish a survey on Qualtrics. (Can be accessed via AUaccess)

- You can also utilize Microsoft Forms to administer an online survey. Remember to add your advisor and relevant team members as collaborators on the form, so they can also view results.
- There are a variety of ways to gather feedback outside of having people complete a survey! Consult with your advisor to talk through simple, effective options and/or review this Selecting a Method guide.

Post Event Phase

- ☐ Did you gather feedback from attendees in an event survey or another method?
- ☐ Have you scheduled a time to debrief the event with your planning team and review event feedback?
- ☐ Has attendance been tracked in AUinvolve?
- ☐ Do you need to follow up on any incident(s) that occurred at the event?
- ☐ Have you shared event photos/recap on social media?
- ☐ Have all outstanding invoices been paid? Have all receipts been tracked and submitted?
- ☐ Have you uploaded photos and videos to AUinvolve?
- ☐ Do you need to send thank you letters or emails to anyone who helped with the event?
- ☐ Have you saved all event documents and a written reflection on the event with advice for the future planner in Box?