

# KEYS TO A GREAT PROGRAM

- **Scheduling Facilities**

Where you hold your program is very important. The available facilities can determine audience size, date, and time. It can set the mood for formal, informal, workshop or auditorium style. Rooms get booked on campus quickly. You must reserve them early, through the Scheduling & Events Office at [www.willamette.edu/dept/scheduling/](http://www.willamette.edu/dept/scheduling/). You must be a registered organization to reserve space on campus. Stop by the Office of Student Activities (OSA) to learn how to become a registered organization if your group is not already one.

- **Establishing a Budget**

How much money do you have to work with? Will revenue need to be generated? What kind of resources do you have at your disposal to raise money and/or cover costs? If you plan on charging admission, it is important to consider what this fee will cover as well as how much participants will pay. (See the *Campus Funding Resources* handout for more information.)

- **Timeline**

Many program planners find it helpful to make a timeline working in reverse: start at the day of the event and fill in publicity deadlines, facility agreements, etc. This is called a backwards calendar and it can help you see if you have a realistic time frame or if you are setting yourself up to be unable to meet your obligations.

- **Contracts**

Another thing to consider is that speakers and entertainers will want you to sign a contract. Be sure to read the contract thoroughly and have your advisor review and sign it. It is best to use the established WU contract for all events. This is available on the OSA website. **Students should not sign contracts because then they can be held financially and legally responsible for the event.** If you have questions, make a notation and ask for clarification. Check with the Student Activities staff if you have any questions or concerns about a contract.

- **Publicity**

There are many different ways to publicize an event – posters, flyers, banners, etc. Pick up the *Publicity Basics* and *Publicity Policies & Ideas* handouts in the Office of Student Activities for more information.

- **Program Details, Follow-up and Clean-up**

Be sure to make a list of what needs to be done before, during, and after the event and who will do them. What are your equipment needs? Do you need registration tables or table clothes? Special power hook-ups for speakers, computers or telephones? Be sure to ask your guest speakers or performers what materials or equipment they need in order to provide a quality program.

- **Little Extras**

As event planners we usually get caught up in the major elements of the program; publicity, bills to be paid, room reservations, and presenter information. Adding some finishing touches to your event can turn a great event into a fantastic event. How wonderful would it be if the people who attend your event left feeling excited and looking forward to your next program? The little things count.

- Have someone greet participants when they come through the door.
- Print out nametags if the event involves people meeting and interacting for the first time.
- Provide event volunteers with the location of the closest phone to call Campus Safety in case of emergency.
- Purchase an item from the Willamette Store as a gift for your guest performer(s) or speaker(s).
- Provide the audience with programs or event schedules.
- If handouts are to be used, make sure there are enough for everyone.
- Choose someone who enjoys public speaking to read a prepared announcement to introduce the program.
- Evaluate the program, and make suggestions for improvements next time (use the *Event Evaluation* handout).
- If appropriate, write thank you notes or find a way to show your appreciation for helpers.
- Create a folder/binder to pass on to the person who will work with the program in the future.
- Have party favors for more special events.
- Small decorations (e.g. candles or balloons at nicer events) can be a nice touch in adding to the atmosphere.

This is one of many handouts available to you. Feel free to meet with any Student Activities staff member for more details about this topic or any others related to leadership or your student organization. We also have open advising hours every Wednesday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The Office of Student Activities is located in the University Center, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, or by telephone at (503) 370-6463. Visit our website at [www.willamette.edu/dept/osa](http://www.willamette.edu/dept/osa). Adapted from the Office of Student Activities and Leadership, University of Michigan.