



The Gertrude C. Ford  
Ole Miss Student Union

# Event Planning Best Practices

## Event Goals

- Who is your audience?
  - Will this event be open to the public or campus, for members of your RSO only, or by invitation only?
  - Who will manage guest lists or invitations if applicable?
- Decide on the type of event your RSO will have.
  - Is this event meant to drive membership, provide professional development for current members, raise money for philanthropy, is it strictly social, etc?
  - Is the theme or name of the event appropriate? How does the theme or name of the event reflect the purpose of your organization?
  - Will the event require a general liability waiver for attendees?
  - What are the short/long-term goals for this event?
- Are your goals measurable?
  - measurable goals are important for being able to determine the success of an event. For example, if you are attempting to recruit new members, how many did you have sign-up?

## Budgeting

- What is your budget?
  - Do you have a budget for your event? Are you using the **Student Activity Fee**?
- Where will you spend your budget?
  - Space reservation
  - Transportation
  - Food
  - Activities
  - Speakers
  - Etc.

## Marketing

- How are you marketing your event? Do these methods reach your intended audience?
  - Social Media
  - GroupMe
  - **The Weekly Leader**
  - **The Powder Blue**



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## Venue Reservations

- If your event will be on-campus, has your RSO checked to see if the space is available? What is the process by which an RSO can request the space? **Student Union spaces** can be rented for RSO events.
  - Don't forget – just because an RSO has requested a space does not guarantee that it will be available.
  - If you have requested space but haven't heard back from the venue/space, a thoughtful but professional follow-up is appropriate.
- When considering off-campus venues, your RSO may want to consider what liability insurance the venue utilizes or offers, what the capacity is for the space, and what expectations the venue will have (utilizing the venue's own security or catering, space utilization policies, etc.)
- Secure the event's space.
  - Obtaining contracts from off-campus venues or verification from on-campus departments may take time. Be sure that your RSO has factored in the time it may take to secure a reservation in event planning.
  - When planning events off-campus, who is authorized to execute contracts? Who might need to review venue contracts?

## RSO Travel

- If traveling beyond Lafayette County, finalize a transportation plan.
  - Has the RSO considered utilizing common carrier transportation?
  - If staying overnight, what are the housing/room accommodations, and do your event's attendees feel comfortable with such accommodations?
  - Are you aware of/ know the laws of this city and/or state in which the RSO is traveling?



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- Submit an **Event Registration**
  - Because complex events may require various consultations and documentation, we'd recommend submitting an event registration submission as early as possible. It's not a terrible idea to submit the event registration submission 20-25 business days in advance to ensure that your RSO has enough time to complete any necessary additional steps. Instructions for any additional steps that need to be taken will be communicated via the event registration submission.
  - The description of your event on the Forum should follow the following template:
    - A descriptive note about what activities the event will entail;
    - Who's specifically invited;
    - Additional the public would need to know.
  - Check out these great examples for ideas!
  - At a minimum, any event registration will require the submission of the form and verification of a space reservation.
    - Events with higher risk may be subject to additional requirements. RSOs can expect any of the following additional requirements:
      - Attend a UPD security consultation;
      - Hire security;
      - Submit contracts to appropriate University departments (security, bussing, off-campus venues, etc.);
      - Submit a list of event monitors.

## Booking Entertainment

- If the event will require entertainment booking, what logistics need to be addressed?
  - Who can make decisions regarding contracts on behalf of your RSO?
  - Is there enough funding to cover the cost of the booking?
  - Does your RSO understand its obligations from the contract?



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## Utilizing University Resources

- Utilize University department resources.
  - Parking & Transportation Services
    - Does the event require any special parking accommodations?
    - Will the event require changes to bus routes or dictate road closures?
  - Student Disability Services
    - What accommodations can your organization provide to ensure that all students, staff, and University visitors are able to enjoy the event?
    - As noted, in the University's Commitment Statement on Disability Access, "In accordance with the goals and creed of The University of Mississippi, and to further support a campus rich in diversity, the University will encourage excellence, inclusion, and respect for the dignity of those with disabilities and will recognize and promote the value of individual differences." Be sure to check out the statement to learn more about the University's operating principles.
  - Facilities Management
    - If the event will require physical trash cans, tables/chairs, road closures, barricades, sound, etc, has your RSO contacted Facilities Management to secure such equipment?
    - Will the event require electricity to be turned on or water irrigation systems to be turned off? Be sure to double-check with Facilities Management.

## Misc.

- Prepare materials for the event.
  - Does your RSO have the materials necessary to carry out its risk management plan? (wristbands, cell phone numbers, emergency contacts, first-aid kits, etc.)
  - If alcohol will be present during the event, will there be food and water available for attendees?
  - What is the plan for setting up the event location and cleaning up? How has such a plan been communicated to appropriate parties?
- Communicate.
  - If this event is open to the public, what is the RSO's marketing plan to let people know?
  - If the event is by invitation only, how is your RSO communicating with guests prior to the event?



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## After Your Event

- Reconcile any outstanding balances.
  - Have all invoices been paid? If not, who is responsible for completing payments to the necessary entities?
- Outreach.
  - If any incidents occurred, what outreach may need to be done to appropriate parties?
  - If the event was an incredible success, who should be contacted to share the news?
- Consider assessment.
  - What assessment will you use to determine if your event objectives were met?
  - If the event will be reoccurring, what changes need to be made in the future? How are these notes going to be communicated to incoming officers? Where are such notes stored and preserved?