

# event



# planning

# Why Program?

Involvement in co-curricular activities enhances and enriches your college experience. Programming provides you with the opportunity to develop leadership skills, interact with different and diverse personalities, develop artistic and creative talents, and contribute to the community. Programming and organizational opportunities foster a greater sense of community and allow you to pursue hobbies and interests such as politics, ceramics, photography, and the arts. There are a number of ways to get involved in programming on campus, such as a student organization that may focus on a particular area of interest or concern or working with your academic department or other student service office.

Planning an event, whether it is a small discussion, club party, or campus-wide lecture, requires forethought and time. Your organization may have an idea for an event, but may have questions on how to make it a reality. We offer guidelines to follow to help you develop and stage an event that fulfills its purpose, serves the community, uses scarce resources wisely, and does all of these with minimum headaches for you, the organizer.

While planning your program, it is wise to anticipate problems and correct them. While it is true that mistakes and accidents may happen, a well-planned program can address and correct many of these before they occur.

# Program Planning & Event Management

Follow the College Activities Office's  
11 Steps to Programming Checklist

- Program Brainstorm**
- Reserve your location**
- Fill out University Alcohol Forms**
- Reserve your audio-visual equipment**
- Complete all contract paperwork**
- Submit contract for payment**
- Create marketing campaign**
- Order refreshments**
- Confirm details with performers, space manager, advisor, and all volunteers**
- Walk through event logistics**
- Evaluate your program**

## **1. Program Brainstorming**

If you're a member of a student organization, chances are you'll be holding events—whether it's a meeting, a speaker, a panel, a dinner, or a dance. Your program should reflect the needs and personalities of those planning it and those for whom it is being planned. Always consult with your full organization about their ideas and comments; indeed, solicit input along every step of the way. This very important first step ensures that you have empowered the members of your organization to become involved in the planning process—it also helps you get more volunteers when the time comes! Some important things to remember are:

- Go into a program brainstorm with an open mind—you never know what good ideas will come about.
- Have a few ideas of your own in the back of your head in case the group needs a starting point.
- Remain neutral as you facilitate. Remember—this process is more about them than it is you.
- No one likes for their ideas not to be used. Be sure to *use* the ideas or input that you are offered.
- Seek out voices that aren't heard. If there's a quiet person in the back of the room, approach them at some time and ask her how she feels about the ideas presented.
- Be the voice of reason—run ideas past your advisor who can catch some common programming pitfalls and/or provide you with a history of that type of program at Barnard.

## **2. Reserving Your Location**

At least ten days prior to your event, or at the beginning of the semester when more space is available, pick up a Event Reservation form from the College Activities Office or the Special Events Services Office in 122 McIntosh Student Center. Consult with the staff in the Special Events Services Office about what spaces are available in your time frame. Your choice of space can depend on:

- Stage
- Theme
- Numbers of attendees
- Space intimacy
- Decorations
- Formality
- Food
- Availability

After you've confirmed an available space, fill out your form with all of the details. Your advisor must sign this form. This should be turned in at least ten days before your event so that your facilities needs may be met. **Be sure to draw an accurate diagram of how you wish the space to be setup.**

### **Furniture Descriptions**

The College has 3 types of tables. 60" round tables can seat 10 tightly and 9 comfortably. 48" round tables can seat 6, while 6' tables can seat 6 or be arranged in various forms to fit your needs.

When requesting chairs, please specify which chairs you would like. The College has black folding chairs for informal events, blue chairs with arm-rests that work well in most situations, and a limited number of green VIP chairs that can be used for more formal occasions.

***Barnard clubs can also reserve space in Alfred Lerner Hall. Check out policies there at [www.columbia.edu/cu/lernerhall](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lernerhall). Watch out for pre-calendaring dates each semester for the following semester.***

### **3. Reserve your Audio Visual Equipment**

At least ten days prior to your event, pick-up an Audio Visual Needs Request from the College Activities Office or from the Special Events Services Office. Audio Visual staff in the Special Events Services Office are available to consult with you regarding any questions about the best use of sound and other services for your event and specific to your space.

Your Audio Visual Equipment needs can depend on:

- Your need for amplified sound
- Your desire to use a microphone
- Size of the audience
- Whether a DJ will bring his/her own equipment
- If your performer uses multi-media
- If lights are necessary

#### **4. Fill Out University Alcohol Forms**

First, ask yourself if alcohol present at your event is necessary for your event to succeed. See the last section of this manual for complete instructions on how to conduct events with alcohol present. Be sure to fill out all necessary paperwork following the guidelines in the back of this manual. You should work with your CAO Advisor to fill these forms out.

#### **5. Complete All Contract Paperwork**

At least three weeks prior to your event, you should confirm with your performers about how many checks they will need cut. Usually you will only need one contract per group—but sometimes groups, especially bands, will want a check per member of the ensemble.

**Remember:** Barnard College students cannot be paid with a College Activities Office contract—they must use the student worker contract available in the Office of Career Development.

So, when you find out how many checks you will need, obtain the same number of contracts. Read carefully over the Barnard College contract and fill in each space accurately. Below is a step by step process for having your contracts signed:

1. Communicate with Performer: How many checks will they need?
2. Obtain same number of contracts.
3. Fill out contracts completely.

4. Send to performer for her/his signature.
5. Sign the contract.
6. Submit the contract to your College Activities Office advisor for her/his signature.
7. Make four copies: one for the performer, one for your records, one for your advisor, and one that along with the original will be submitted for payment.

## **6. Submit Contract For Payment**

After your advisor has signed the contract and you have made four copies, you should fill out either an SGA Check Requisition or a Barnard College Check Requisition and attach an original and a copy of the original contract. This should be submitted to the SGA Bookkeeper in the College Activities Office for payment. You should write on the requisition either “Hold for Pickup” meaning you will hand deliver the check to your performer, or “Mail to Payee” meaning that the check should be mailed directly to the performer. Your performer will usually indicate which option she/he prefers.

## **7. Create Your Marketing Campaign**

What’s the most important part of programming? Letting folks know that your program will be happening! A well-crafted marketing plan can be the piece of the puzzle that creates a fabulous program, while a hastily put-together marketing plan can be the piece that kills your program. It’s never too early to begin marketing!

Effective publicity is informative, concise, and cost effective. Effective publicity has to have an element of style and imagination, that extra something that catches the audiences’ eyes and ears and sparks their interest in your program. That piece that makes it stand apart from the 500 other fliers by the elevator door!

The following are suggestions of some of the many ways to publicize a program and a few hints on how to get the most

out of each. By not limiting yourself to just one form of publicity, you can develop a more rounded advertising strategy that will surely attract more attention and attendance.

Posters: Posters have been the backbone of program publicity and for good reason. Posters convey information well, are inexpensive and have the potential to be attractive and imaginative. But because of their strong points, posters are used by most program planners. In order to win the “war of the bulletin boards” and not have your posters missing in action, here are some ideas to make your posters more eye-catching:

- Size—While bigger is not necessarily better, it can give you an advantage in the area of 8.5 x 11, 8.5 x 14, and 11 x 14 posters. Butcher paper and newsprint paper can widen and lengthen the frontiers of your poster sizes. Be aware of bulletin board size restrictions when designing your posters. **Remember that the College Activities Office has a poster-enlarging machine that can turn your 8.5 x 11 posters into 24” x 31.5”.**
- Shape—Try using geometric shapes for your posters to make them stand out among others.
- Color—Try to include as much color in your posters as possible. This can get expensive, so magic markers and glitter can be cheap alternatives.
- Illustrations and Graphics—Pictures can catch a person’s eye in a way that text cannot. A very provocative graphic can draw attention to your poster.

Table Tents: Duplicated materials can be printed, folded, and located in such a way as to display publicity information to people located near a table. Table tents work well in Hewitt Dining Hall and McIntosh Student Center. Students should contact Dining Services to ask about table tent placement.

Balloons: Write a message on a helium balloon and hand it out. You know someone will want one! Another great idea is to inflate a balloon, write a message on it, then deflate it and put it into someone’s box or tape it to their door.

Banners: Make it big! Banners can be placed on the front of Barnard Hall and in McIntosh Student Center. A twin-sized flat sheet works best, and you can use the Poster Paints in the College Activities Office. Stop by the College Activities Office early to sign up for Banner Space!

Napkins: Program information can be stamped onto napkins and distributed in Hewitt Dining Hall and in McIntosh Student Center. Ask Dining Services for permission first!

Invitations: People really like some personal attention. Craft a cute invitation and distribute it to your floor, your class, or your organization. Invitations can also be slipped under doors!

Other creative ways to publicize your event:

- T-shirts
- Bumper Stickers
- Bookmarks
- Display Tables
- Lapel Buttons
- Lollipop Messages
- Bulletin Boards
- Campus-wide emails

It is important that you give your publicity adequate lead time. Program publicity should be released no less than one week before your program's scheduled date. If you release information more than two weeks in advance, remember to do a reminder poster closer to the actual date. Suspense publicity is a great way to get people excited—and you can do this up to 6 months in advance!

Be sure to develop a timeline or calendar of your publicity deadlines and dates. Things to include are design deadlines, when things need to go to print, when you want your newspaper ads released and when those need to be submitted, and when your banner-making party will be!

## **8. Order Refreshments**

At least two weeks prior to your event, decide if you are going to cater your event or if you'll just pick up some simple snacks like cookies and chips.

ARAMARK: ARAMARK Dining Services can design a “tasteful” catered event for you. Be sure to get a cost estimate to stay within your budget! Dining Services also offers Kosher options! Meet with a representative or call (x46653) in your order at least 5 business days prior to the event.

Local Grocers: The College Activities Office and SGA have direct billing from University Food Market and Appletree Grocer. Stop by 209 McIntosh to have your advisor give you one of these forms for all of your simple food needs.

Other establishments: If you order refreshments from a local restaurant or market, you can do one of three things: get an invoice and submit for a check, use the student organization credit card, or purchase on your own and get reimbursed. To have a check cut, you must get the invoice and submit the requisition on the Monday before the Friday before the event. If you are getting reimbursed, please remember to use a tax-exempt form as Barnard College cannot reimburse you for taxes paid.

## **9. Confirm With Performers, Special Events Services, Food Services, and Volunteers**

Between a week and 3 days prior to your event, you should contact all persons involved in event preparation and running. Confirm all of your orders, arrival time, setup time, breakdown time, as well as cost. This covers you in case something goes wrong or in case there has been a miscommunication.

## **10. Walk Through Event Logistics**

The day before your event or the day of your event, take a few moments to go to the space where your event will be held. Walk through the details of the event—how tables will be

setup, how long the event will last and how you will time speakers, etc. Be sure to note things like exits and handicap accessible entrances.

## **11. Evaluate Your Program**

Perhaps the most important and most often forgotten piece of programming is evaluating each and every event that you conduct! By evaluating programs, you will know what things went well, what things did not go so well, and what things your audience appreciated or did not appreciate. You can also find the answers to questions like:

- “What part of the program would you include in future years?”
- “What drew you to attend this program?”
- “Would you bring friends to this program if it happened again?”
- “Will you attend future programs of this organization?”
- “How would you rate this event against other events you regularly attend on campus?”

Also be sure to communicate with those persons who worked your event. Ask them how the logistical process worked, if they would make changes, and what pieces worked well. Also be sure to ask them how the information sharing process worked, if they received important notices in a timely manner, and if they felt that they were empowered during the event and that their feedback mattered.

As you become more comfortable evaluating programs, you will begin to notice that the quality of your programs rise and your audiences arrive more excited and leave more content.