Event Planning Guide – Faculty & Staff

This guide is designed to assist you in planning an event on campus and to help you anticipate all types of needs you may have when hosting an event. Please also reference the event checklist which contains corresponding sections of action items for each planning stage.

1. Event Concept, Goal Setting, & Program Development – Ten or more weeks before event
   a. What do you hope to accomplish with the event? Define specific goals of the event and event programming.
   b. Who is your intended audience? How many people do you hope will attend?
   c. How does the nature of the event fit with the goals of your department?
   d. What type of program will best accomplish your goals? (lecture, dinner, etc.)
   e. What is a good date/time to hold this event? Check other campus and community events to avoid a scheduling conflict for your target audience. If you are inviting a speaker or other VIP guests, it is best to select a date that coordinates with their schedules. If you would like Dr. Bleicken to attend/participate in your event, email Trina Smith (trina.smith@armstrong.edu) to check her availability.
   f. Will you need volunteers to help run the event? What will their duties be?
   g. Does your speaker or event entertainment require a contract? If so, all contracts must be approved by university council prior to signing. Please send a copy of the contract to Lee Davis (lee.davis@armstrong.edu) before committing to any contract.

2. Budget – Eight or more weeks before event
   a. Determine your event budget.
   b. Potential budget categories for an event: tables, chairs, linens, flowers, table decorations, other decorations, catering, alcohol, signage, invitations and save the date cards, printed materials, postage, gift items, publicity

3. Hospitality – Eight or more weeks before event
   a. Is your speaker/performer traveling from out of town? If so, coordinate all appropriate travel, lodging and transportation needs well in advance.
   b. Consider setting up a campus tour for VIP invited guests if appropriate.
   c. Secure an interpreter if necessary. Contact Kelly Woodruff (Kelly.woodruff@armstrong.edu) in Disability Services.
   d. Schedule a training session for volunteers where you can assign and explain duties prior to event.

4. Invitations – Eight or more weeks before event
   a. Determine a guest list and gather all necessary mailing information.
   b. Decide on an invitation format – printed or electronic.
   c. Request invitation design from marketing by completing a project request form on the marketing department website. Turnaround time is a minimum of three weeks, so make sure to do this as soon as possible.
   d. If you are designing your own invitations, make sure to reference the university style guides found on the marketing department website to adhere to all style
rules. [http://www.armstrong.edu/Departments/marketing/marketing_publication_guidelines](http://www.armstrong.edu/Departments/marketing/marketing_publication_guidelines)

Marketing must approve your design, which requires a **minimum two day turnaround** time.

e. Invitations should be mailed **no later than four weeks prior to an event**. RSVPs should be requested for **10 days prior to the event date** to ensure an accurate count for catering and seating needs.

f. Assign someone to collect RSVPs and to follow up with invitees who do not respond.

5. Event Location – **Six or more weeks before event** *Note: If mailing invitations, selecting an event location should be completed before designing and mailing, which means more than six weeks in advance should be given for finding a venue.*

   a. Determine what space on campus is right for your event. Consider the size of the room in comparison to the anticipated number of attendees and style of room set up (lecture or theater style seating vs. round tables for a dinner or luncheon event).

   b. Use the R25 event space request system found on Port of Armstrong to request the space you would like to use.

   c. If you have questions regarding event scheduling, contact Macy Bragg ([macy.bragg@armstrong.edu](mailto:macy.bragg@armstrong.edu)) for Student Union spaces, [armstrongcenter@armstrong.edu](mailto:armstrongcenter@armstrong.edu) for Armstrong Center spaces or [conferencing@armstrong.edu](mailto:conferencing@armstrong.edu) for other campus locations.

   d. Select a rain location if your desired event space is outdoors.

6. Publicity – **Six or more weeks before event**

   a. Announce your event in all appropriate campus communications (website, emails, etc.).

   b. Begin promoting your event through all available avenues (posters/flyers, social media, etc.)

   c. If appropriate, contact marketing department to send out a press release.

7. Additional Printed Materials (Other Than Invitations) – **Six or more weeks before event**

   a. Determine what types of printed items you need for your event.

   b. If you need these pieces produced by the marketing department, complete a project request form on their website.

   ([http://www.armstrong.edu/Departments/marketing/marketing_project_request](http://www.armstrong.edu/Departments/marketing/marketing_project_request))

8. Awards & Gift Items – **Six or more weeks before event**

   a. Will you have a giveaway for event attendees? If so, who will design and create this item? Advertising Specialty Services is a good vendor for giveaway items. They can be found here: [http://advertisingspecialtyservices.com/contact/](http://advertisingspecialtyservices.com/contact/)

   b. Are you giving an award, plaque or certificate to honor an attendee? Where will you order this? What will the wording on the item be? How will the presentation factor into the program? Laser Light Engraving is a good vendor for awards and plaques. They can be reached at (912) 355-2001.
9. Room Set Up – *Four or more weeks before event*
   a. Determine how you would like the room set up (tables, chairs, stage, buffet tables, etc.)
   b. If possible, draw a diagram of your set up.
   c. Request event set up through the appropriate room contact. For Student Union rooms, Macy Bragg. For Armstrong Center rooms, Christine Vanasse. For all other campus spaces, use Maintenance Request System on Port of Armstrong to request assistance.
   d. If you need items for your event that the university does not have available, contact outside vendors to contract their services. Keep in mind that all contracts must be reviewed by university council before they are signed.

10. A/V & Technology Needs – *Four or more weeks before event*
   a. Speak to your event space contact regarding what needs you might have for your event. (i.e. – projector & screens, podium w/ microphone, etc.)
   b. Your event space contact will advise you if you need to request certain items or services from IT.

11. Catering – *Four or more weeks before event*
   a. Contact catering to book your event date. Email Armstrong.catering@armstrong.edu.
   b. Determine what type of menu will best suit your event – buffet, served meal, reception.
   c. Catering can provide you with menu options to choose from based on what type of event you select.
   d. Be certain to notify catering of any dietary restrictions your guests might have.
   e. Discuss what types of table linens you need for your event with catering.
   f. If you wish to serve alcohol in any campus location that is not the Armstrong Center, contact the special events coordinator (Amanda.heinz@armstrong.edu) for the necessary paperwork. If your event is in the Armstrong Center, you must obtain a special event liquor license from both the city of Savannah (http://savannahga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1799) and the state of Georgia (http://dor.georgia.gov/special-event-non-profit).
   g. Final attendance count should be given to catering **one week prior** to your event.

12. Event Equipment & Décor – *Three or more weeks before event*
   a. Decide what items are needed for stage/room décor – plants, flags, banners, etc.
   b. Choose table centerpieces. The special events coordinator maintains an inventory of some decorative items you may borrow for centerpieces. Contact Amanda.heinz@armstrong.edu for a list of the current available items.

13. Safety, Transportation & Parking – *Three or more weeks before event*
   a. Contact university police (police@armstrong.edu) to discuss security requirements for your event.
   b. Determine where guests will park for your event and work out reservation of spaces with university police.
c. Consider sending a map and parking instructions to all invited guests. Also consider having parking and directional signage posted to ease guests in finding your location.

14. Event Follow-Up – *One to two weeks after event*
   a. Send thank you notes to speaker/performer and VIP guests.
   b. Write a post-event summary or evaluation with notes on how the event went and if it met the goals you established.
   c. Process all payments.