



EVENT PLANNING

12 Quick RIC Event Planning Tips (Due to the impact of COVID-19, no events will occur on campus until further notice – however, you are encouraged to host virtual events!)

- 1) **Make sure that your event relates to your organization’s mission.** If you’re the president of the juggling club, it probably doesn’t make sense for the group to be planning a chess tournament.
- 2) **Decide on the purpose of the event and the target audience.** This decision will help the organization to select the type of event and to develop a marketing plan. For example, if the event’s purpose is to educate accounting majors about career opportunities, the organization could then invite a panel of accounting professionals and make announcements in all of the accounting courses.
- 3) **Reserve a space that makes sense for your event.** If you realistically only expect 30 people to attend, you do not need to reserve the Student Union Ballroom. Student Union 307 may be more appropriate.
- 4) **Before you advertise, make sure that you have CONFIRMED your space reservation, as well as your guests or performers.** Most performance contracts stipulate that the event cannot be advertised until after the contract is signed.
- 5) A note on contracts – **only your advisor can sign contracts on behalf of the College and all contracts must be reviewed by SCG.** Contracts are negotiable. Just because the band wants green M&Ms and ginseng tea in its dressing room, doesn’t mean that you need to provide those items. Student Activities staff members can help you to read through and negotiate a contract.
- 6) **Make sure that your guests or performers are reputable.** Ask him/her for references from past performances. Find out if other colleges have hosted the performer and contact those schools. If you’re inviting someone to campus, you want to make sure that he/she is a quality performer who understands the purpose of your event.
- 7) **Before you purchase any decorations, check with Student Activities to see if they have the necessary supplies.**
- 8) **Do not rely on a SA Event Promotions digital banner in Donovan to cover all of the advertising for an event.** Not all students go into Donovan, and those that do, don’t always look up. Consider submitting an announcement to the SA Briefs, bringing flyers to the Office of Residential Life & Housing to be hung in the residence halls, making announcements in classes, creating a Facebook event, sending an e-mail to your organization’s e-mail list, or handing out flyers on the Quad.
- 9) **Start advertising at least two weeks before the date of the event.**
- 10) **Confirm all reservations** – space, Donovan, guests, performers, AV, etc. – the week of the event. **DO NOT ASSUME THAT YOUR RESERVATION HAS NOT BEEN MISPLACED!**
- 11) **Before the event, decide which of your organization members will be responsible for each task at the event.** One person cannot handle all of the responsibilities; one person needs to check people in, one person needs to be in charge of sounds and tech needs, one person needs to pass out flyers and information, etc. Contact all volunteers before the event to ensure that they are aware of their assigned duties. You might consider having a pre-event meeting with all volunteers to go over responsibilities and expectations.
- 12) **At the event, advertise for your other upcoming events.** Consider collecting names and e-mail addresses so you can add the attendees to your organization’s e-mail list. You can also e-mail a survey to attendees after the event to get feedback on the event’s success.

Event Planning Checklist

Discuss event idea with members of the organization/department
Research availability and cost of performers, speakers, or vendors
Pick a date and time for the event – Take into consideration other scheduled events by checking RICRooms, the RICalendar, and contacting other student organizations/departments
Develop a proposed budget with cost estimates
Apply for funding
Determine if the space you are thinking of reserving is physically accessible (i.e. Are doorways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair? Is there an entrance that does not require the use of stairs? Are working automatic door openers in place at the entrance? Are ramps and working elevators available? Is there appropriate seating available to all? Is it possible to have three consecutive chairs next to the space for a wheelchair?)
Space reservation, Donovan Dining catering order, and AV equipment request through RICRooms.
For audio visual presentations, take into consideration reasonable accommodations such as including subtitles and captions so individuals with hearing impairments are able to access the material and information. SCG can help you secure an ASL interpreter.
If having food or refreshments, make sure food and beverage service is accessible to persons in wheelchairs or people with other mobility impairments
Performance contracts and W-9 – All contracts need to be reviewed by SCG and signed by the organization officers and advisors.
Promote the event – Do not advertise an event until the space is reserved and contracts are signed!
Have a member of the group be the designated person who will serve as a “sighted guide” to participants who are blind or visually impaired and/or serve as general a guide participants who need assistance finding their seating, restroom locations, and elevators.
Make sure your publicity and advertisements include information regarding reasonable accommodations. For example, “If you need an accommodation to fully participate in this event, please contact [sponsor name] at [sponsor phone/email]” or “Individuals needing reasonable accommodations for disability access are to contact [sponsor name] at [sponsor phone/email]”.
Recruit organization/department members to help run the event
Event supplies and decorations
Outline of event timeline/schedule
Compile event rules or guidelines. Take into consideration the social suitability and varying attention spans of all participants
Compile handouts and/or programs. Use clearly readable font and large text size when possible. Make your materials available in electronic format when possible. Consider including the following statements on advertisements and materials for your event, “The goal of our event is to make materials and activities accessible to all participants. Please inform organization/department leaders of accessibility barriers you encounter and request accommodations that will make event activities and information resources available to you” or “This publication is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact [Name and Number]”
Confirm space reservation, including setup and audio visual equipment.
Confirm arrangements with all vendors and service providers
Have signs directing attendees to entrances, elevators, and bathrooms. Please refer to signage policies for guideline and regulations http://www.ric.edu/administrationfinance/Pages/Current-Administrative-Policies-and-Governance-Documents.aspx
Make sure path to entryway is clear and accessible to all individuals
Event Evaluation
Thank You Notes
Complete budget with actual costs and process payments

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