### A few tips for planning a successful event

#### General

- Keep all emails/copies of paperwork for reference.
- If corresponding with a certain person, group, or company often, create a folder in your inbox and set up a filter for their emails - it'll be much easier to track messages than scrolling in your inbox to find some specific one.
- Know where the nearby restrooms are and be able to give clear directions.
- If it isn't an emergency, don't call it one - most service people on campus will find it refreshing and it goes a long way to establishing a good long-term relationship.
- If you messed up, say so, own it
- Find humor in everything that goes wrong or you'll go crazy.
- Use variety when publicizing your event - send emails, flyers, hang posters, write a press release and anything else you can think of.
- Remember that it is your responsibility to plan for individuals with disabilities - find out ahead of time if an interpreter or special access accommodations will be necessary.

#### Budget

- Everything costs money - no really, *everything*.
- Everything requires paperwork - no really, *everything*.
- It is worth the trouble to get signature authority on accounts or setting up one 'event account' - it saves time in the long run, especially when you are in a pinch.
- Even before you reserve the room, you need to know the budget - the budget will control everything else.
- Take the time to sit down with your boss and ask "what is the goal of this meeting?" or "what has to happen for you to declare this event a success?" before you even ask the budget.

#### Room Reservations

- Always check room availability before reserving rooms.
- Reserve your room with a cushion of time around the actual event start time (especially before). If you don't, your event may be delayed because the exam or meeting that is taking place before your event may go longer than it was scheduled to. This is especially important if you have anything to set up - it's awkward to be hanging signs, moving chairs, and putting out materials in front of the participants who have arrived on time.
- If an event is cancelled, notify all affected parties (your room reservation contact, food services, parking, etc) as soon as possible. Don't forget to 'unreserve' your room, in case another event planner is in need of the space.
- Know if the room has wireless internet access available.
• When you are picking a room decide if you want attendees to have wireless internet access - sometimes it is a life-saver, sometimes it means no one is paying attention to the speaker.

Food Service

• Always have coffee, no matter the time of day or event. Someone always wants a cup of coffee.
• Always have water. You can request pitchers of ice water and cups. This saves on bottled water expense.
• Most people do not eat breakfast. You can usually reduce the amount of food, but always have enough juices and caffeine.
• If on a food budget, host an event not at a normal mealtime. Cookies and Cokes at 3:30 p.m. is a good combo.
• Think veggie friendly.
• Always turn in a catering request 10 business days prior to the event.
• When Food Service faxes you a copy of the contract, look it over carefully. Make corrections if necessary. Sign it and fax back.
• If you have food out in a public area, either a) guard the food from passers-by who think "Ooo, free food!" or b) order way too much food and acknowledge that you have fed the masses.
• Chartwells Catering will have your food and drinks set up 30-45 minutes prior to the time you listed when filling out a catering form, so do not pad there! So if you stated event start time is 3 p.m., they will already have set up by 2:30 p.m.
• Since you can never get attendance numbers perfectly, it is best to go a bit small - catering is prepared for a 5% increase in attendance (in most cases) so it is better to take advantage of that than to waste.

Setup

• Contact the appropriate person for help with Custodial and Cleaning. Be sure they clean the bathrooms prior to an event. Ask for additional toilet paper. This is especially important if you have a Saturday event – staffing is limited on the weekends. You should always check the cleanliness of the room prior to your event.
• Have an "event kit" – scissors, tape, safety pins, paperclips, Band-Aids, etc. After a few events you learn what you need.
• Find out who has the space before and see what their setup was. This helps to assure that the room will be set up the way you want it with minimal fixes.

Nametags

• Alphabetize them on the welcome table.
• Have blank nametags and markers for unexpected guests.
• Call before the event to confirm the spelling of names.
• Nametags should be placed on the right shoulder.
• Have a place to discard the backing of stick-on nametags.
### Transportation

- Provide a campus map to the bus company. Mark the closest parking lot and event location.
- If picking up guests at an airport, have the bus company clearly mark their bus with "FAU" or the event name. Also, ask for the driver's cell phone number and give it to guests.

### Audio/Visual

- Provide Learning Resources a layout of the room or meet with them prior to your event to discuss where you want the equipment setup in the room.
- Have your own extension cord on hand.
- Unless the meeting is small (20 or less) get a microphone. There are people who cannot speak loudly and there are those who are comfortable with a microphone.
- If you are lucky enough to have an "extra" laptop in your office, keep it for event use. You can remove a lot of the programs and even an older, slow laptop will get some speed back.
- Learning Resources does NOT provide extension cords, easels, notepads, laser pointers, Mac adapters, podiums, whiteboards or whiteboard markers. These are provided by you or the facility.

### Speakers

- Take the time to contact speakers about their needs - do they walk when they present (and therefore need a wireless microphone), do they bring a laptop or do they need one, do they use PowerPoint or do they use something else. If you assume, you will be wrong.
- Although a speaker will rarely use a bottle of water if you put one by the lectern, s/he will be glad you left it.
- You will have to keep the meeting on schedule - use a visual time system (there are plenty of them out there) for speakers and be ready to give the speaker the hook. It is not being rude - it is respecting the time of the attendees and it is ensuring that each speaker has equal time.
- When developing an agenda, remember to pad. Events start late and speakers run long.

### Getting People to the Event

- Provide a cell phone for last minute questions or directions.
- Direct visitors to enter at the main entrance (Glades Road).
- Re-record your office voice mail with pertinent info about your event in progress.
  - When you are putting your event information on your voice mail message - make sure you do both your internal and external greetings.
  - Leave a copy of all event information with a couple of people in your office who are likely to get calls.
- An updated list of faculty members and their mail stops (for mailing flyers) can be had by contacting the Provost's Office.
- You cannot over inform regarding events - don't think "they must know," because they don't.