

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY

SPECIAL EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

For Extended Campuses

Ideally, special events are planned 6 months or more in advance. Unfortunately and often, event planners have less time to plan and implement a thoroughly executed event. Even if your event is in two months or two years, this event planning checklist can provide a written record of all the necessary components for success.

Getting Started

Date Completed	Person Responsible
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| _____ | _____ | From the very beginning, put everything in writing. The Special Events Website has many sample forms to help you get organized, including a Budget and Planning Guide, Evaluation, and Sample Agendas. |
| _____ | _____ | Determine the purpose and goals for the event. |
| _____ | _____ | Identify a theme. |
| _____ | _____ | If you're holding the event on the St. Louis campus, check on desired dates by contacting Marianne Kirk at 314-968-7456 or kirkma@webster.edu in the University Communications department to avoid scheduling conflicts with other University events. Then reserve space for the event through the appropriate University Office, using the Special Events Website for general information. |
| _____ | _____ | Determine the overall budget for the event and various component allocations. |
| _____ | _____ | Identify and invite all speakers/entertainers involved in the event. Put all agreements and details for any speaker or entertainer in writing in the form of a letter of agreement or a contract. |
| _____ | _____ | Who on campus is going to be involved in your event? For instance, will the President make opening remarks? Make sure you get the date on the calendar of all key participants. |
| _____ | _____ | Who are you inviting to your event? Students, faculty, staff, trustees, donors, alumni, targeted guests, and/or the general public? Write a plan to promote the event, including who you want to reach and the various methods you will use. Contact University Communications at 314-968-7456 for help. |
| _____ | _____ | Is this a big event involving multiple target audiences and/or components? If so, consider establishing a planning committee to assist with audience-building, promotion, sponsorship, and implementation. |

On campus Publicity

Date Completed Person Responsible

_____ _____ Depending on the event's size and scope, consult as you go with Linda Nottestad or Randy Wright in Extended Campus Administration. Call 314-968-6905.

_____ _____ Identify other faculty, staff members or departments who may have similar or related interests. Inform them of the event and ask their help in either audience building or participation in the event.

_____ _____ Are you sending invitations or registration materials for your event? Develop a mailing list (names and addresses) of the desired guests/audience. Start this process early, because invitations should be sent no later than 6 weeks prior to the event. If you have ample time, consider sending a 'hold the date' card 4-6 months prior to the event.

_____ _____ Consider alumni of your school or college (in this case, the Alumni Office can help, but you'll pay for your own mailing). Call 314-968-7141.

_____ _____ Is it appropriate to invite trustees or donors? Talk with the Development Office (314-968-7148) about the possibilities.

_____ _____ When thinking about general print promotion, start by thinking about a poster. Write copy for all printed materials you will use to build an audience for your event – your poster first, then invitations, response cards, flyers, brochures, press releases or public service announcements. Be sure to include a map and parking information, highlighting parking for disabled persons.

_____ _____ Determine the total number of invitations to be printed and/or the number of posters/flyers need to reach your desired audience.

_____ _____ Give the final copy to a designer or printer with written instructions about desired look, budget, quantity and due date.

_____ _____ Does your campus have an internal newsletter?

_____ _____ Hang posters on campus anywhere there's a bulletin board.

_____ _____ Flyers (which can be the same design as your poster, or not) can be sent via campus mail faculty and staff. If your budget allows, send flyers or invitations to all of your students at their home address. Do you have any student organizations on your campus? Don't forget them.

_____ _____ And how about table 'tents' in break areas and on computer monitors?

On campus Publicity (continued)

Date Completed Person Responsible

_____ _____ Sidewalk chalk ‘ads’ along well-traveled routes? Other creative ideas (banners, premiums, etc.)?

_____ _____ Flyers stuffed under car windshield wipers?

_____ _____ And whenever you can, get students involved in planning and implementing your event. Their word-of-mouth is the best form of publicity.

Off campus Publicity

Date Completed Person Responsible

_____ _____ If you’re planning your event well in advance, you may also consider community partnerships – are there civic organizations that might be interested in sponsoring your program? Contact colleagues, Development, or the Career Center (314-968-6982) for ideas.

_____ _____ Is the general public invited? Prepare a press release and PSAs to send to local media and calendar sections. Contact director of news and public information, Polly Harbaugh, at harbaupo@webster.edu or 314-968-6954 for guidance.

_____ _____ Utilize your students’ connections in the community. They can bring flyers to their places of business and, when appropriate, submit your press release to their company newsletter.

_____ _____ Another way to spread the word outside of Webster is to hang posters around town. You can do it yourself or hire a company to do it for you.

_____ _____ Maybe a formal partnership is unnecessary, but you’d still like to tell other community groups about your event so they can tell their members. Think about sending invitations to civic groups, professional associations, other universities and schools, non-profits, and other niches that might be interested in your topic. Whenever possible, it is more effective to direct an invitation to a specific person rather than a department or company.

_____ _____ Unless you can afford frequent and substantial placement, print and radio advertising will probably be ineffective. Save your money.

Set Up

Date Completed	Person Responsible
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| _____ | _____ | Meet with in-house or outside catering representatives to select food and beverages within food budget. Make arrangements for delivery, set up, service and clean up of food and beverages. |
| _____ | _____ | Write and submit all necessary purchase orders one month in advance. |
| _____ | _____ | Consider any special cleaning, moving of equipment or furniture, arranging for a podium, or trash removal that may be necessary as the result of the event. |
| _____ | _____ | A month in advance, make arrangements for any special security needs, reserved parking or plan to accommodate special parking needs. |
| _____ | _____ | Make arrangements early with a photographer, including day, arrival time, type of photos/video wanted, fees and expected delivery date of photos. |
| _____ | _____ | Complete program schedule, including topics, speakers, times, and room(s). Mail schedule to all participants two weeks in advance. |
| _____ | _____ | Review committee member, volunteer or staffing assignments to insure a clear understanding of the responsibilities of everyone involved with the event. |
| _____ | _____ | Make directional signs necessary to indicate parking lots and event location(s). |
| _____ | _____ | Will you need to make copies, produce documents, or perform any office functions on site? Check out the facilities available to accommodate these needs. |
| _____ | _____ | Do attendees pay for or register for your event? Think through this process carefully, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an invitee database, if applicable • Ticketing – is there a one price or a pricing structure for early registrants, meal plans, etc.? • Advance payment process – receipts, payment methods accepted • Can your attendees register on-line? • Registration confirmation process (think simple, think e-mail, and don't forget directions to the event) • Creating an attendee database as you go • Registration packets (for the day of the event) – include site maps and pre-printed nametags • On-site registration process – receipts, change, payment methods |

Program Preparation

Date Completed	Person Responsible
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| _____ | _____ | If you want to audio or video record the event, you must get permission from the speaker(s). Plan for equipment needs and the technical personnel. |
| _____ | _____ | Make hotel reservations or arrange for housing for the speaker. |
| _____ | _____ | Plan for transportation, entertainment and meals for the speaker, too. |
| _____ | _____ | Check with speaker(s) about any special presentations needs, handouts or requests they may have. |
| _____ | _____ | Make arrangements for A/V equipment. Remember, there may be additional rental costs. |
| _____ | _____ | Will you provide a printed program or attendee evaluation forms? |

Event Day

Date Completed	Person Responsible
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| _____ | _____ | Check the location set up, i.e. chair arrangements, podium, head table, food service set up, to be sure it is the way you expect it. |
| _____ | _____ | Have all printed materials for the event delivered to event location. |
| _____ | _____ | Set up registration table, if used, for registration materials, typed name tags, blank name tags, pens, etc. |
| _____ | _____ | Put a glass of water at the podium for speaker(s). |
| _____ | _____ | Check on all microphones, lighting, electrical connections, sound system adjustments and video or slide equipment. |
| _____ | _____ | Arrive at the event at least one hour early to double-check everything. |
| _____ | ALL | Enjoy the event! |

Wrap Up

Date Completed	Person Responsible
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_____	_____	Complete a written evaluation of the event, with suggestions for future events. Compile attendee evaluation forms, if applicable.
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_____	_____	Write thank you notes to participants, volunteers, staff and others as appropriate.
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_____	_____	Report on event results to Extended Campus Administration.
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Submit your event story and photographs to the appropriate Webster publications:

_____	_____	Inside Webster , the on-line employee newsletter of Webster University. Contact Debra Schwartz at schwarde@webster.edu or 314-961-2660 x7011.
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_____	_____	The School of Communications newsletter Media Bulletin . 314-968-7154.
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_____	_____	The School of Business & Technology online newsletter, Nota Bene . Contact Jeryldine Tully at jtully@webster.edu or 314-961-2660, ext. 7871 for information.
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_____	_____	Webster World , contact Claudia Burris at burriscl@webster.edu or call her at 314-968-6958.
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_____	_____	The Journal , call 314-968-7538 or http://www.webujournal.com/
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_____	_____	Also, send photos of the event and a press release to your local media, as appropriate.
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