Comstock Memorial Union
Event Planning Guide

**Reservations**
Call 218.477.2261

Student Union -
http://www.mnstate.edu/cmu/reserve-plan/

Room Requests -
http://schedule.mnstate.edu/virtualems/

If you are planning an event that will take place in the Ballroom, Underground or the Main Lounge, please schedule an appointment with our office to discuss your event.
Event Planning Guidelines

This is a tool for you to use in event planning and is meant to be a guide in your planning process. The timeline for your event may be more condensed than this guide. However, the general steps of planning a successful event that are outlined here are important to complete.

First Things First — General Guidelines for Event Planning

6 to 12 Months Prior
- Determine the type of event you are going to host (banquet, dance, cultural event, speaker, conference, etc.)
- Put together an event committee
  - Establish roles and responsibilities for each person
- Estimate the number of people who will come to your event
- Select a few ideal dates and times in order to reserve a space for your event
  - To reserve a space that will be a good fit, you should know what kind of seating you will want (banquet, row seating, etc.) and approximately how many people will attend
- Create a budget estimate for the event
  - Include rental fees, food, decoration, promotion, staffing/labor, and equipment
- If applicable, contact potential speakers and/or performers for your event

3 to 6 Months Prior
- Choose a catering menu and meet with someone on catering staff to discuss the quantities needed
- Complete necessary paperwork
  - The Student Union requires all groups to fill out a security assessment form
  - Any events that need a sound engineer must submit a request
  - Any events that will require additional power should complete a work order (discuss with CMU)
  - Sign contracts with any performers who will be at your event
- If applicable, choose an event theme or color scheme for marketing

1 to 2 Months Prior
- Begin to publicize and advertise your event
- Finalize room set up and decorations
- Create directional and welcome signs
- Recruit volunteers to help out on the day of the event
- Personally invite any important guests or people who you want to invite

1 to 2 Weeks Prior
- Finalize catering details by providing a guaranteed count
- Prepare any items you will need the day of the event
  - Name tags, decorations (and supplies), speeches, seating charts, signage, gifts, prizes, etc.

Day of the Event
- Arrive early with a prepared schedule of the event, instructions for volunteers, decorations, etc.
- Perform sound and equipment checks
- Follow your event schedule and enjoy your event!

After the Event
- Pay final bills
- Complete event evaluation
- Thank your volunteers, speakers, performers, etc.
These notes are to help you think about the specific needs of different types of events. Remember every event is unique, so some items may not apply or your event might require additional items. Often events incorporate several of these elements, so please read through all areas that pertain to your event.

### Banquets
- Remember that you must use MSUM Dining Services to provide catering for your event. If you would like specialty food prepared or to negotiate special permission for an item to be brought in, you can contact the Catering Office at 218.477.2852.
- The tables will be clothed and skirted for you. For specific color preferences, you will need to work with the Catering Office. If you wish to decorate the tables, you are free to do so.
- It is important to provide an initial estimate of people and then a final number the week prior to your event to the Catering Office.

### Cultural Events
- If you would like to have cultural foods specially prepared for your event, the Catering Office is willing to work with you. Contact them at 218.477.2852 about the foods you would like to serve and be prepared to provide them with recipes.
- If you will be having any performances during your event, it is important to communicate the performers’ needs to the Event Services Staff. The Event Services Staff will help you determine the technical needs and hire MEISA to provide technical support for sound and lights if necessary. This information needs to be provided at least a month prior to your event, but more time is better. Your organization will be charged for a sound and/or light technician whether the people are hired by MEISA or by the Union.
- If you are expecting many guests who are not affiliated with MSUM, the Public Safety Office may determine that a safety officer needs to be present at your event to ensure the safety of all attendees. Your organization will need to pay for the officer’s time. Public Safety will use the security assessment form to determine the number of officers needed and must be completed at least a month prior to the event.
- Be sure to reserve an additional room for a dressing room or green room.
- If needed, arrange for a rehearsal the day prior to the event.

### Dances
- The Ballroom and the Underground are the two best options for dances in the Union.
- The Union can provide music through the Yamaha Sound System in the Ballroom or the DJ Booth in the Underground. Additionally, we can work with you if you would like to contract a DJ for your event.
- Please note that most dances will require a safety officer to be present to ensure the safety of all attendees. Your organization will need to pay for the officer’s time. Public Safety will use the security assessment form to determine the number of officers needed and must be completed at least a month prior to the event.

### Speakers and Performers
- Please provide a technical rider to the Event Services staff that outlines the speaker or performer’s sound, lighting, and other technical needs at least one month prior to your event.
- For events that will require a significant amount of power (for example, a live band), it may be necessary to have an electrician wire the room for additional power. Your group will be charged for the electrician’s labor.
- Be sure to use the MSUM University Contract with your speaker or performer. Visit the Office of Student Activities for information about contracting outside performers.
- Be sure to reserve an additional room for a dressing room or green room.
Event Planning Checklist

Use this basic checklist to assist your group in planning a successful event. We may not have all of the specifics that your event requires on this sheet, so brainstorm prior to starting your event planning to make sure everything gets covered!

Name of the Event:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Event Purpose:

BRAINSTORMING

☐ Will the event work in a space that is available? Are there logistical challenges to having the event?
☐ Does the event serve a purpose related to your organization? (What are our goals?)
☐ How many volunteers do we need to make the event happen?
☐ Do we have the resources (money, people, time) to make it happen?
☐ Do we have enough time between now and when we want to have the event to plan?

SCHEDULING

Person in charge: ________________________________

☐ Talk with the right room reservation office
☐ What size room do you need?
☐ What kind of tech needs do you have?
☐ What can you afford?
☐ Tentatively book a couple of dates
☐ Call your performer or vendor (if applicable) and schedule the performance date
☐ Call the reservation office back to confirm your date
☐ Schedule a meeting with Event Services to go over your tech needs and room set-up

ADVERTISING

Person in charge: ________________________________

(see attached advertising sheet)

☐ Posters
☐ Email Listservs
☐ Dragon News (Student/Staff)
☐ Can Stand / Easel
☐ Advocate
☐ Sell Tickets
☐ Main Lounge Banner
☐ Sidewalk Chalking
☐ Contact Table in Union
☐ Napkin Holders / Kise Windows
☐ Digital Signs

WEEK PRIOR

Person in charge: ________________________________

☐ Make sure all details are finalized with Event Services
☐ Confirm final catering numbers
☐ Call any performers to make sure they have all the information
☐ Assign event shifts for group volunteers (set-up, during the event, take down)
☐ Create any programs/fliers/signage needed at the event
☐ Prepare an event box with supplies (i.e. tape, scissors), decorations, tickets, etc.
DAY OF EVENT
Person in charge: ______________________________
☐ Arrive early for event for set-up
☐ Meet any performers and direct them to dressing rooms, rehearsal, etc.
☐ Prepare dressing rooms for performers
☐ Conduct sound/equipment checks
☐ Set up registration/greet guests at door (have cash box for ticket sales)
☐ Help with clean up

AFTER THE EVENT
Person in charge: ______________________________
☐ Send thank you notes to performers and volunteers
☐ Do a post-event evaluation (see attached)
☐ Pay Bills in a timely manner

NOTES

*Don’t forget to keep a list of the people and phone numbers that you’re contacting throughout your planning.

BUDGET PLANNING
Person in charge: ______________________________

ANTICIPATED EXPENSES
 Facilities Rental $ _____________
 Food $ _____________
 Decorations $ _____________
 Publicity $ _____________
 Speaker Fees / Honorariums $ _____________
 Supplies $ _____________
 Technical Support $ _____________
 Staff Labor $ _____________
 Security $ _____________
 Films License or Permits $ _____________
 Other $ _____________
 TOTAL $ _____________

ANTICIPATED INCOME OR REVENUE
 Admission Fee $ _____________
 Co-Sponsors (list below) $ _____________
 Grants Received $ _____________
 TOTAL $ _____________

*If your totals do not match, you may need to adjust your program accordingly.

NOTES
ADVERTISING SUGGESTIONS

The Student Union and Activities has a variety of resources that can help student organizations advertise their events and activities.

Advertising Opportunities:

**Bulletin Boards:**
- Approval – The Info Desk must approve and stamp prior to display
- Location – Near the C-Store, Union City, ROC, and Admin Office/Info Desk

**Can Stands:**
- Reservation – Recreation and Outing Center
- Location – SE entrance, SW entrance, Kise entrance
- Duration – day before and day of event

**Digital Signs:**
- Design – 1280 x 720 pixels (save at 72 dpi) include the important info (Who, What, When, Where)
- Submit – submit a .jpg or PDF to marketingteam@mnstate.edu
- Location – Across campus

**Facebook:**
- Make a facebook page, ask friends to “like” your page, create an event and invite people
- Organization members share information about your event via their personal pages

**Main Lounge Banners:**
- Make at the Activities Resource Center (ARC) in CMU 225 (**No supplies can leave the ARC**)
- Horizontal Banners – 3 ft x 7 ft, Vertical Banners – 5 ft x 3 ft for student organizations
- Must be approved by The Info Desk prior to display.

**Main Lounge Tables:**
- Reservation – Admin Office

**E-mail List Servs:**
- Student Organization Listserv - Post* - Send email to student_orgs@lists.mnstate.edu.
  *NOTE: Only members can post to this listserv.
- Dragon Digest – To send information out using Dragon Digest, fill out the submission form.
- Student Dragonews – fill out the submission form

**Mailbox Student Organization Stufflers:**
- Location – Office of Student Activities
- Amount – 140 mailboxes
- Approval – OSA front desk

**If you have other “outside-the-box” advertising ideas and opportunities, contact the Student Union & Administration Office, cmu@mnstate.edu or 218-477-5814 to discuss ideas and options at least two weeks prior to the start of your advertisement.**
Event Description

What was the event like? Describe what happened during the event (Order of the program, performances, speeches, intermission, videos, music, seating, decorations, awards, etc.)

How many people attended the event? How did they respond to the event? Did they like it? Were there things they complained about?

Food: What did you serve? Did you order enough? Was it the right type of food?

Were there any technical difficulties or issues? (sound, lights, videos, etc.)
Event Evaluation

Name of the Event:
Date:
Time:
Location:
Event Purpose:

1. Did we meet our goals/objectives with this event?

2. What could we do differently in the planning process? Did we give ourselves enough time to take care of all the details?

3. What was the final budget/total amount spent? (If revenue was generated, how much?)

4. What could we have done differently to make the event better?

5. Did we have enough advertising/PR for the event? How could we have made this better?
6. Where were there communication challenges? With committee members? Performers? Event Services?

7. Did we face any group conflict with this program? What was it? How was it resolved? What could we have done differently?

8. Will we do the event again? Was it worth our time and effort?

9. What changes will we make for next time?

10. What advice would we give to the next group of student who wants to recreate this event?

11. What did we learn from putting on this event about planning, teamwork, promotion, managing projects, etc.?