Student Union and Activities
Event Planning Guide

Reservations System (VirtualEMS)
http://msum.scheduling.mnsucu.edu/

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

Campus Info
http://www.mnstate.edu/schedule/

For additional information contact:

CMU Administrative Office
Comstock Memorial Union 222
218.477.2261

Office of Student Activities
Comstock Memorial Union 113
218.477.2790

Scheduling Services
218.477.2400
schedule@mnstate.edu
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
  - Decide on the best way to communicate
  - Schedule dates for planning meetings
- 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 the catering staff to discuss the quantities needed
  - catering@mnstate.edu
- Complete necessary paperwork
  - The Student Union requires all groups to fill out a security assessment form
  - Fill out a Special Expense Form (for prizes over $25, gift cards, apparel, or food for faculty/staff)
  - Any events that require Dragonsound 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
- Create an event on DragonCentral
- Finalize room set up and decorations
- Create directional and welcome signs
- When necessary complete an Extra Duty Request form for a Public Safety Patrol Officer to attend your event
- Recruit volunteers to help out on the day of the event
- Personally invite any important guests or people 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
- If giving out prizes over $25 or gift cards, have the recipient fill out the Gift Reconciliation form
- Follow your event schedule and enjoy your event!

*After the Event*
- Pay final bills
- Complete event evaluation
- Thank your volunteers, speakers, performers, etc.
Event-Specific Considerations

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 catering@mnstate.edu
- Request table clothes through the Catering Office. The tables will be clothed and skirted for you. 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 catering@mnstate.edu 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 for sound and lights. 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.
- 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.
- 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.
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.

**Collecting Cash at an Event**

The Office of Student Activities (OSA) has cash boxes available for your organization to check out to use during a fundraising event. Request a cash box by visiting the OSA (CMU 113) or email schobsa@mnstate.edu. Please submit your request for a cash box at least 8-10 business days (weekdays) before your event. If it is an evening event please make sure the cash is secured in a locked office until the cash box is returned the following day.

**Scheduling Outside of the CMU**

- For information about reserving spaces in one of the auditoriums please contact Elizabeth Evert Karnes at evertel@mnstate.edu
- For information about reserving spaces elsewhere on campus contact please use VirtualEMS or email schedule@mnstate.edu
- Please communicate the setup needs of your event when you submit your reservation.

**Working with Public Safety**

- Public Safety requires notification, and possibly an assigned officer to be present, for sponsored events when:
  - The number of people expected to attend the event is greater than 100
  - The event is open and advertised to members outside the MSUM community (i.e. other college students, high school students, and local community members)
  - Cash is being collected
  - Sensitive or controversial topic
  - Political dignitaries are present
  - The event is a dance
- Complete the “Extra Duty Request” form and submit to Public Safety at least 2 weeks prior to your event date. Public Safety will make a determination is a designated patrol officer will be assigned to staff your event and if so, you will be notified and your student organization account will be billed for the hourly staffing rate.

**Outdoor Sound, Chalking, and Bonfires**

- Requests for chalking, and bonfires need to be submitted and approved through Public Safety. Requests for outdoor sound amplification need to be submitted to Public Safety as well as the City of Moorhead. The request form and policies can be found at https://www.mnstate.edu/publicsafety/policies.aspx.
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 suggestions sheet)

- Posters
- Email Listservs
- Dragon News (Student/Staff)
- DragonCentral
- Advocate
- Sell Tickets
- Main Lounge Banner
- Sidewalk Chalking
- Contact Table in Union
- Napkin Holders / Kise Windows
- Digital Signs
- KMSC Radio

**EVENT PAYMENT OPTIONS**

- Work with your Faculty Advisor or Sandra Schob the Activities Business Manager to make a payment plan. Payment options include:
  - Student Expense Report (reimbursement). Please get itemized receipts for your purchases.
  - Purchase Requisition (purchase order number)
  - Advisor’s state credit card
- Items purchased for the use of MSUM student organizations, purchased with student organization funds is tax exempt eligible. MSUM is charged sales tax on prepared food, lodging and transportation.
- MUSM’s tax exempt certificate can be found at [http://www.mnstate.edu/business-services/forms.aspx](http://www.mnstate.edu/business-services/forms.aspx) under purchasing.
## BUDGET PLANNING

Person in charge: ______________________________

### ANTICIPATED EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities Rental</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorations</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Fees / Honorariums</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Support</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Labor</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films License or Permits</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ANTICIPATED INCOME OR REVENUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admission Fee</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Sponsors (list below)</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants Received</td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$ _________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

### 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)
- DragonCentral is an option for taking attendance
- Help with clean up- Please return spaces as you found them

### AFTER THE EVENT

Person in charge: ______________________________

- Send thank you notes to performers and volunteers
- Do a post-event evaluation (see attached)

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

The Student Union and Activities has a variety of resources that can help student organizations advertise their events and activities. Visit https://www.mnstate.edu/osa/advertising.aspx for more specific information.

Advertising Opportunities:

- **The Advocate:**
  - Policies- For advertising policies and rates visit https://msumadvocate.com/advertise/

- **DragonCentral:**
  - Create an event on DragonCentral and invite people to RSVP

- **Napkin Holders / Kise Windows**
  - Approval- The MSUM Dining Services must approve a request form (found at https://www.mnstate.edu/osa/advertising.aspx)

- **Bulletin Boards:**
  - Approval – The Admin Office CMU 222 must approve and stamp prior to display
  - Location – Near the Union City, and Admin Office

- **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 Admin Office CMU 222 prior to display.

- **StudentNews:**
  - Dragon Digest – To send information out using Dragon Digest, fill out the submission form.
  - Student news – fill out the submission form

**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.
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.?