EVENT TIMELINE

Check these items off your To-Do List when planning your event.

FOUR TO SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR AHEAD

- Determine the purpose, format and audience for event
- Create an estimated budget and get approval
- Select the date, but before confirming it check the date with calendars; events calendar, and calendars of major participants
- Organize a committee (please include Event coordinator)
- Draw up preliminary guest list categories. Begin collecting addresses for mailing list
- Select and reserve a facility
- Develop a rain plan if the event is to be held outdoors
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms, if necessary
- Contact Campus Dining about catering
- Select and order recognition items (award, honor, citation)
- Order favors, souvenirs, printed folders, and other give-away items
- Reserve rental equipment such as vans, buses, tables, chairs, tents, podiums, etc.
- Confirm program speakers
- Get all necessary administrative approvals
- Plan promotion and publicity of event to internal and external audiences

TWO TO THREE MONTHS AHEAD

- Write copy, design and get approval of printed invitations and all other printed materials
- Finalize and get approval of the guest list
- Send save-the-date announcements to guests (3-5 months prior to the event)
- Contact program participants and
  - Supply suggestions for their remarks
  - Gather their biographical information
  - Request a photo of each participant for publicity and programs
- Keep campus officials, deans, and administrative officers informed
- Meet or contact the Parking office to discuss parking/shuttle if needed
- Decide on music, book entertainers and talent
Plan the decorations
Order prizes, novelties, foods, or other special needs
Contact and/or meet with the florist
Update security on your plans. Advise Special Events and Protocol if dignitaries will be invited.
Begin publicity
Request photographer or videographer
Begin creating a logistical outline to document all arrangements as they are decided on and confirmed.

TWO MONTHS AHEAD
Select menus and confirm contract with outside vendor
Prepare mailing labels for invitation mailing
Send out invitations 4 – 6 weeks prior to event (depending on event)
Finalize decor and facility arrangements
Make hotel and transportation arrangements for out-of-town dignitaries and guests
Mail an itinerary to dignitaries
Prepare, write and print the program
Finalize the audiovisual presentations
Order any ceremonial items needed
Inspect the facility – make sure there are no safety hazards.
Recruit volunteers to staff registration if needed, such as student ambassadors and greeters, etc.

TWO TO FOUR WEEKS AHEAD
Meet with Event coordinator to go over logistics
Record and acknowledge RSVPs as they are received
Mail out confirmations tickets, parking permits, to attendees if necessary
Ask Facilities for building requests: unlock rooms and floors for date and times.
Send detailed instructions to all staff and participants (including tickets, parking permits, and maps)
Finalize details with caterer, rental company, and all vendors
Write speeches and introductions, if necessary.
Do a diagram of the room/building to be used as a seating chart or for set up

ONE WEEK AHEAD
Create a Management “day of” schedule outlining all deliveries, etc, and timing for the event
Print out the guest list in alphabetical order
Finish place cards, table cards, and/or name tags
Create the seating chart, if needed.
Plan a meeting or contact all staff, greeters, ambassadors and volunteers on their duties
Gather all presentation items such as gifts, plaques, and trophies. Collect ceremonial items.

Prepare the briefing packet and send along with the guest list to VIPs (with full names, titles, business and professional affiliations, and other specific interests), biographies, and the final schedule of events to administrative leadership or host

Deliver prepared introductions, citations, and speeches to those who will read them

Contact catering with RSVPs and guarantees

Prepare event box with any supplies, such as tape, string, zip ties, staplers, clip boards, baskets, etc. you may need

THE BIG DAY

Arrive early

Bring the logistical outline, production schedule, directions, phone numbers, food orders, seating charts, name tags, table assignments, guest lists, and the event supply box with you.

Check all facilities

Set up event venue with tables, signs, awards, etc.

Conduct sound, computer checks.

Set up registration. Be sure it is ready no later than 45 minutes prior to the start of your event.

Relax and smile!

AFTER THE EVENT

Send thank you notes to staff, volunteers and vendors

Finalize billing and prepare final budget, if necessary.

Conduct event meeting to discuss success or ways to improve in the future

Survey attendees, if appropriate.

CONTACT MEGAN CHURCH, EVENT COORDINATOR