

Southwestern College Event Planning Guide & Checklist

Are you planning an event?

If so, this resource is for you!

The Southwestern College Office of Communications, Community and Government Relations (CCGR) provides you this Event Planning Guide & Checklist to help you navigate the process for planning and executing a successful event. In addition, this guide will help ensure proper protocol, guidelines and production are met. Doing so is critical so that CCGR may assure clarity, accuracy, and integrity of information provided to the students and community we serve, as required by Accreditation. **Planning an event not only represents your immediate department, area or group, it represents Southwestern College and the District.**

The key ways to maximize your events success is to plan ahead, understand your event details, logistics, and budget. Planning ahead will help in avoiding duplicated efforts, maintaining a consistent image of the college, ensuring proper support and execution, while streamlining your planning and timelines.

Before you start planning for your event, we recommend you review this guide in it's entirety to have a better understanding of details that may need to be worked on at various stages. **Large scale events may require anywhere from 6-12 months planning ahead, while smaller scale events may require less planning time.**



Although our office may not be able to assist you with every detail, we are here to provide guidance and assistance in those areas where we can help. Areas where CCGR may support your event are: **logistics guidance; graphic design for event materials and collateral, cost saving ideas and resources, creative direction, decor/florals/supplies, event promotion, and more.**

A recommended timeline is included to not only assist you in planning, but to ensure that our office is able to meet your requested needs, both in an efficient and timely manner. Following this timeline will help avoid unnecessary conflicts, such as: unwanted overlaps and conflicts with other events; limited room or venue availability; loaner decor and supplies being unavailable; limited support from our office due to previously scheduled events or commitments.



Why it is important to inform CCGR before you begin planning your event?

The Office of Communications, Community and Government Relations (CCGR) is responsible for ensuring that district-wide events follow proper protocol when hosting and promoting events. In addition, CCGR reviews collateral and promotional materials, to ensure that all areas speak with one consistent voice to our external community and audience.



News media coverage

CCGR is the key point of contact between the College and external news media outlets. In many instances events may prompt news media coverage. However, **it is required for all external news media inquiries and contacts to be referred to CCGR.** This step is critical in ensuring proper college leadership and/or staff is aware of their presence, official college statements are conveyed, while maintaining both a unified message and image of Southwestern College.

Please be sure to be inclusive of CCGR when planning your event from its inception to completion, whether we are fully or partially involved. Help us, help you so that we may have the opportunity to support, plan, promote and showcase your event successfully as well as highlighting its success upon conclusion.

Event Timelines Which is best for you?

The timeline below is highly recommended to allow for ample planning and support you may need from CCGR and other departments, such as Facilities. However, you may modify dates according to your needs and set your own goal dates.

Before you begin planning, we recommend selecting multiple possible dates for your event to have flexibility when selecting your final event date. When doing so, factor in holidays, long holiday weekends, potential conflicting yearly celebrations or events, and anticipated weather if holding an event outdoors.

A listing of yearly events is included on page ___. Approximate dates are provided to help select a date for your event. (*currently developing)



Recommended Timeline (*refining/expansion of timeline in progress)

6-12+ MONTHS OUT

Recommended for those seeking potential sponsors and those securing venues which may require early booking. Reaching out to sponsors requires adequate time to research their processes and timelines as well as developing your supporting event materials for Sponsorship requests.

- Identify event and event objectives
- Identify target audience
- Provide preliminary event notification to CCGR
- Select a few tentative dates for your event

12-16+ WEEKS OUT

- Select final event date
- Notify CCGR of final event date
- Draft preliminary event timeline
- Clarify expectations and desired outcomes
- Provide Event Checklist to event chair and committee
- Assess event needs and requirements
- Discuss potential roles and duties for committee members
- Discuss potential needs for volunteers, how many may be needed, for which duties and how recruitment will take place

10 WEEKS OUT

- Finalize event timeline
- Complete checklist
- Submit Event Support Request Form to CCGR
(currently developing)
- First-draft timeline for asset development and event-support tasks

8 WEEKS OUT

- Key-stakeholder input on event mini-plan

6 WEEKS OUT

- Refine needed assets and necessary support tasks

4 WEEKS OUT

- Key-stakeholder affirmation of mini-plan
- Asset development / repurposing underway

3 WEEKS OUT

- Assets drafted
- Assets to key stakeholders for review
- Review and refine key-task list

2 WEEKS OUT

- Send Event Reminder, Parking details, Volunteer Details

1 WEEK OUT

- Refinements to tasks and final details
- Event walk-through if needed

EVENT WEEK

- Final walkthrough
- Event execution

2 WEEKS AFTER

1. What went well?
2. What could have been better?
3. Where could efficiencies be gained next time?

Event Planning Checklist

EVENT DETAILS

Name of Event: _____

Date (Included tentative date(s) if unsure): _____

(IMPORTANT: Check for potential conflicts, holidays, major sporting events, local events, community events that may affect attendance. This alone can have a significant impact on the success of your event).

Time: _____

(When selecting event time and duration be sure to factor in Set-up Time, Arrivals, Reception, Program, Clean-up/Break Down)

Location (On-campus): _____

(If planning an outdoor event, make sure to incorporate an alternate plan in the event of inclement weather)

Venue name and address (for **Off-Site** Venues):

Venue Name: _____

Venue Address: _____

Venue Contact: _____

Parade Participation: (Notify CCGR of **BEFORE** registering):

Parade Name: _____

Objective/Purpose of Event (what do you want your attendees to learn, take away or experience?): _____

Audience: _____

Number of attendees (Approximate number):

Actual or Range of attendees: _____

Event Chair (Main Point of Contact):

Name: _____

Committee Members (if applicable):

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Theme of Event/Decor (if applicable): _____

Events can be professional and fun at the same time. Be creative and stand out from the rest! CCGR can assist with the Creative Concept and Theme for your event. We also house a multitude of event decor supplies that are available to use free of charge (subject to availability).

NOTIFICATION TO REQUIRED AREA(S)

Preliminary Notification to Communications, Community & Government Relations: _____

Secondary Notification to Communications, Community & Government Relations with **final date & details:** _____

Notification to Facilities: _____

Notification to College Police (if necessary): _____

BUDGET / SPONSORSHIPS

Secure an Event Budget
(TIP: Seek internal college support or External Sponsorship opportunities if limited funding is available. If seeking External Sponsorships, plan at least 6-12 months in advance as Sponsors tend to allocate and distribute their funding within that time frame.)

Budget number: _____

When developing a budget, factor in Venue Cost (if applicable), Food/Catering, Decor, Linens, etc. and plan for unexpected expenses that may arise.

FACILITIES / VENUE RESERVATIONS



What size room/venue is needed?
(If external venue, ask yourself "Is it within our budget?" and "When will Deposit need to be provided? How much?")

Submit request for On-campus Room Reservation? _____

Number of Tables: _____

Types of Tables
of Round Tables (Seats 8-10): Recommend 8 to sit comfortably _____

of Rectangle Tables: _____

of Belly Bar Tables: _____

Number of Chairs: _____

Linens: _____

of Round Linens: _____

of Rectangular Linens: _____

of Belly Bar Linens: _____

Color of Linens

Color of Round Linens: _____

Color of Rectangle Linens: _____

Color of Belly Bar Linens: _____

(See DECORATIONS/FLORALS/RENTALS Section for more information regarding tables, linens and chairs)



AUDIO/VISUAL NEEDS

What audio/visual needs do you have?

- Projection Screen(s): 1 or 2? _____
- Laptop
- Microphone(s): 1 or 2? _____
 - Cordless
 - On Stand
 - On Podium
 - Lapel Microphone
- Slide Show/Powerpoint Presentation (*See Graphic Design/Event Collateral*)

Sound-Check

- Sound-Check on day of event: _____
(*Notify anybody who may need to be present for Sound Check and provide time*)

GUESTS/DIGNITARIES/PRESENTERS

- Develop Guest List
- Develop seating chart
- Seating arrangement for stage
- Develop VIP/Dignitary Guest List
(*check with CCGR for guidance/protocol if necessary*)
- Reserve parking for VIPs and/or Keynote Speaker(s)
(*if applicable*)
- Obtain clearance for VIP parking from College Police
- Email Parking instructions and Event Map to VIPs and/or Keynote Speaker(s)

ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure venue is accessible & has accessible entrance
- Request Accessible Stage Ramp for Speaker
- Provide Accessible Stage Seating for Speaker (if applicable)
- Provide Accessible Seating amongst attendees for Speaker & Speakers Guests (if applicable)
- Accessible Podium needs for Speaker
- Sign-language Interpreter
- Braille version of program? How many copies? _____

GRAPHIC DESIGN/EVENT COLLATERAL

Items below are produced through the Office of Communications, Community and Government Relations. To ensure timely production of these items, we ask that you gather all event details and accompanying text as clear and concisely as possible (**PROOFING IS KEY!**) for inclusion in all materials (*i.e., Title of Event, Date, Time, Address, RSVP instructions, RSVP deadline date, etc.*)

- Save the Date: Printed Format
Target Date to distribute: _____
- Save the Date: Electronic Format
Target Date to distribute: _____
- Invitation: Printed Format
Target Date to distribute: _____
- Envelope: Printed Format
Target Date to distribute: _____
- Invitation: Electronic Format
Target Date to distribute: _____
- RSVP Card
- RSVP Card Response Envelope
- Postcard
Target Date to distribute: _____
- Poster (various sizes available)
- Printed Program for day of event
- Printed Menu to accompany place settings
- Slide Show/Powerpoint Presentation
- Event Signage
 - Registration Table/Check-In
 - A-Frame large signs
 - T-Stand Signage
 - Table Numbers
- Graphics for Social Media (NOT Posting to Social Media)
Target Date to post: _____
 - Instagram Graphic Facebook Banner Graphic
 - Facebook Post Graphic
- Website Graphic
- Zoom Background(s)
- Eventbrite Graphic(s)
- Certificate(s)
- Table tent(s)
- Proclamation(s)
- Resolution(s)
- Follow-up Pieces/Post Event (i.e. Thank You Cards)
- Artwork for Promotional Items/T-Shirts/Givaways/Momentos

- Vendor Referral for Promotional Item Printing: _____
- Other: _____

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Gather handle(s) for Event and/or Department Social Media:
 - Facebook: _____
 - Twitter: _____
 - Instagram: _____

Event Hashtag(s): _____

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Request for CCGR event photography
- Request for CCGR Step-and-Repeat Background
- CCGR contact external vendor for Photo Booth option

DECORATIONS/FLORALS/RENTALS

These items are included in the Facilities/Venue Reservations category, however, inclusion of them in this section allows for planning for decorations, table set-up, centerpieces, layout, etc.

- Décor Budget: _____
- Number of Tables: _____
- Types of Tables
 - # of Round Tables (Seats 8-10): Recommend 8 to sit comfortably _____
 - # of Rectangle Tables: _____
 - # of Belly Bar Tables: _____
- Number of Chairs: _____
- Linens: _____
 - # of Round Linens: _____
 - # of Rectangular Linens: _____
 - # of Belly Bar Linens: _____
- Color of Linens
 - Color of Round Linens: _____
 - Color of Rectangle Linens: _____
 - Color of Belly Bar Linens: _____
- # of Easels: _____

FOOD/CATERING

- Food
- Beverages
- Dietary requirements/special requests

PROMOTION

- Press Release
- News Media Outlets
- Marquee posting
 - Student Services Marquee
 - Corner Marquee (Otay Lakes Road & H Street)

SPEAKERS/ENTERTAINMENT

- Determine speaker needs
- Obtain Biography Information
- Obtain High Quality Photo
- Dietary requirements/requests

EVENT DETAILS & PROGRAM SEQUENCE

- Determine Master of Ceremonies
- Determine Keynote Speaker(s)
- Determine additional speaker(s)
- Determine sequence of Speakers/Presenters
- Obtain full correct spelling of names and corresponding titles of speakers for inclusion in materials/program

DAY OF

- Document and make note of any obstacles/issues you encounter while setting-up, during the event and at the conclusion/clean-up of event. These notes will come in handy when having your debriefing meeting and to find solutions or plan accordingly for future events.
- Sound Check
- Photography
- Name Tags at registration
- Check-In List
- Volunteers for Registration Table(s)

POSTEVENT

- Send Thank You to Speakers/Presenters, Sponsors, Committee, Volunteers
- Request Feedback (seek feedback to improve on your event)
- Finalize Expenses
- Assess Event

EVERYONE MATTERS!

Planning, Inclusion & Equity = Success!

Planning an event not only represents your immediate department, area or group, it represents Southwestern College and the District. Be sure to be **inclusive** when planning, selecting and recruiting committee members. Providing **equitable** opportunities to all for involvement is important and seeking **new** people to become involved in planning your event shows you value others (*many are eager to participate!*).

Whether planning internal or external events, **always think about your attendees as well.** Before extending an invitation, think of all constituent groups, areas who may feel left out if you celebrate in silos and the missed opportunities to share these celebratory events together.

