We find our most successful events involve a Washington University or St. Louis connection or a behind the scenes special opportunity. Further, it takes some time and effort to develop diverse programming that encompasses the interests of your specific community.

So, you have a great idea? Please consider the following items before finalizing your event.

**EVENT GUIDELINES**

All groups are expected to adhere to the following guidelines.

- All events must be open to all alumni and other university constituents regardless of degree, race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or other factors irrelevant to participation in the programs of the university. Events may be geared toward, or intentionally serve the needs of, one segment of the community, but must be advertised and open community-wide.
- Events cannot aim to financially contribute to any other organizations, be they for profit or not for profit.
- Events must support, and not conflict with, existing Alumni & Development events and activities.
- If a faculty speaker is to be invited, the event should be planned far ahead of time. Faculty requests must be routed through your Alumni Association liaison.

**LOCATION**

Please consider the following things when selecting a venue:

- Safe, centrally located, with accessibility from public transportation.
- If guests are driving, what is the situation for parking? Is there a charge for parking? This is a good idea to let the registrants know the fee in advance.
- If a private club is chosen, make sure it does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, etc.

**FOOD**

If you are planning on serving food at your event, please consider the following:

- Can you visit the site and taste the food in advance of the event to help you make selections.
- Consider having a pre-set meal, salad, and/or dessert to save time during the event.
- Will you or won’t you serve alcohol at your event? Does the caterer have a liquor license? Can you serve drinks and pay by consumption (this often saves
money)? Can you save money by serving beer and wine and not cocktails? Will there be students or non-drinkers at your event?

- Your Alumni Relations liaison can help you with menu selection. Always consider dietary limitations or special orders such as gluten free, vegetarian, or Kosher. You can have registrants indicate an entrée choice or dietary concerns when registering for the event. Please let your Alumni Relations liaison know the questions to ask at registration prior to the event.

- For buffets or other self-service food – Do you need serving utensils, plates, napkins, cups/glasses?

- Consider providing a boxed meal for more informal or outdoor events.

- Can you save money by serving beer and wine and not cocktails? Will there be students or non-drinkers at your event.

- Your Alumni Relations liaison can help you with menu selection. Always consider dietary limitations or special orders such as gluten free, vegetarian, or Kosher. You can have registrants indicate an entrée choice or dietary concerns when registering for the event. Please let your Alumni Relations liaison know the questions to ask at registration prior to the event.

- For buffets or other self-service food – Do you need serving utensils, plates, napkins, cups/glasses?

- Consider providing a boxed meal for more informal or outdoor events.

**Services**

Consider the following services which may be needed:

- Will your speaker or panel need microphones, a projector, screen, etc? Do you need to rent items from a separate rental company? Does the facility have them available? Is there extra charges? Do you need an AV tech on site to help with any problems which may arise? What type of computer adapter will be needed? Is the speaker bringing their own laptop which may need an adapter? Will you be providing the laptop? How will the presentation arrive at event (thumb drive, sent to venue in advance, or will the speaker have it pre-loaded on their laptop)?


**Cost**

What will the cost be per person? What will you need to charge attendees? Will the cost be affordable for most attendees? The event cost must cover everything so make sure there are no hidden charges. “Everything” includes catering, audio/visual rentals, gratuities, beverages. The cost objective for events programs is to break even. Work with your Alumni Relations liaison to determine the charge per person. They can also assist with signing contracts, how to make payments, deposits, etc. You will need to work with the liaison to determine who will be paying which charges.
DECORATIONS AND SIGNS

The Alumni Relations Office can provide you with printing directional signage to hang at event, banners, and/or table tents. You might ask for table linens in the university’s colors of red and green.

INTEREST

Is it too focused on a single interest group and if so, is that the goal? If the topic is controversial, be sure to offer a balanced approach (speakers for pro and con, for example).

INVITATIONS

Invitations may be printed or in email form. Invitations take time to design, print, and mail. Printed invitations have an extensive proofing process, so please allow for ample time. When possible we will include directions or a map in the confirmation packets if the site is not well-known, and parking information, including parking costs. Printing and mailing can be very expensive – work with your liaison to determine if printing invitations is even an option. Social media and email may be the only way to publicize the event.

LOCAL CONTACT PERSON

The local alum who has planned the event should serve as the local contact person. It is ideal if the contact person can be available from the time the invitation/email is distributed until the actual day of the event. The Alumni Relations Office phone number and email address will always be listed on the invitation, along with the local contact information. In addition, the Alumni Relations staff liaison should be responsible for signing contracts and other financial commitments regarding the planned event. The local alum, however, is welcome to gather information and be in contact with the venue.

Timing

Begin and end the event when most would consider convenient; choose a day of the week when most are more likely to attend (weekday vs. weekend); check the community calendar and work with your Alumni Relations representative to check the regional Washington University calendar for conflicts. Avoid public and religious holidays and weekly religious services.

Schedule

All events may not have a formal agenda, however a typical time schedule, as noted below, will ensure the program runs smoothly.

**Luncheon**

- 20 minutes: Social period and registration
- 40 minutes: Food service and meal—work with venue to determine how much time to allow
- 10 minutes: Welcome guests, network update, introduce speaker
- 40 minutes: Speaker program
- 20 minutes: Questions and answers followed by thank you and closing remarks
**DINNERS**

30 minutes: Social period and registration. Consider having beverages and appetizers available.

45 minutes: Food service and meal - work with venue to determine how much time to allow

10 minutes: Welcome guests, network update, introduce speaker

40 minutes: Speaker program

20 minutes: Questions and answers followed by thank you and closing remarks

**RECEPTIONS**

45 minutes: Social period and registration. Have beverages and appetizers available.

10 minutes: Welcome guests, network update, introduce speaker

40 minutes: Speaker program

15 minutes: Questions and answers followed by thank you and closing remarks

**ASK EVENTS**

30 minutes: Registration and networking. Have beverages and appetizers available.

10 minutes: Welcome guests, network update, introduce speaker

45 minutes: Panel Discussion

10 minutes: Questions and answers followed by thank you and closing remarks

45 minutes: Networking and wrap up