

Event Guidelines for High Profile/Polarizing Speakers; Public Demonstrations, & Protests; & Discussions Involving Sensitive/Polarizing Topics

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Last Updated: 7/2026

Adapted from: [Princeton University](#); [Stanford University](#)

Event Guidelines for High Profile/Polarizing Speakers; Public Demonstrations, & Protests; & Discussions Involving Sensitive/Polarizing Topics

I. High Profile/Polarizing Speaker Event Guidelines

Stony Brook University (SBU) supports the efforts of recognized student organizations to broaden intellectual discourse on campus and promote a free exchange of ideas. The Office of Student Life aims to support student organizations in this work to ensure they understand relevant policies and procedures. SBU does not endorse any particular event, speaker, or position, but operates in a way informed by and in accordance with University policy.

To best ensure a safe and successful program, please review these guidelines and seek additional support from your assigned Program Advisor and faculty/staff advisor (if applicable). Please reach out with any questions, regardless of where you are in the planning process. We are happy to help and grateful to students who commit their time to fostering a free exchange of ideas on campus.

For additional information, please visit the [resources](#) and [FAQs](#) on the [University's Free Speech website](#).

BEFORE THE EVENT

1. Brainstorm Your Event: Think Through Initial Plan

To ensure a smooth and well-organized event, take some time to consider what you hope to accomplish, brainstorm ideas, and research plans and key considerations. When bringing a speaker to campus, your organization should consider the questions below to help with the initial planning process:

- **Who are you hoping to bring to campus, and why?** Researching your speaker is crucial before inviting them to speak. Does the speaker or their work align with the mission of your organization? Is the speaker a political figure? See the University's [FAQ's](#) on political activity for more information.
- **Have they spoken anywhere recently that you can research to find out how it went?** This context can help during the planning process. Staff in the Office of Student Life Risk Management may require contact information to solicit feedback from references to ensure the service provider is a suitable partner for a student organization and will deliver the requested services.
- **Have you developed a rough outline of the event logistics and how you would like to execute your program?** Your assigned program advisor can provide suggestions for running your event smoothly and keeping it well organized. The [event overview form](#) and [planning checklist](#) are helpful tools for developing plans across various aspects of the program. Additional information and resources are available below to help you plan your event. The [overview form](#) must be submitted at **least 3 weeks prior to the event** for review by your program advisor and Student Life Risk Management staff.
- **When are you hoping to host this event?** To ensure a successful event, ample and advanced planning is needed. Review the "Planning Timelines, Space Usage, Requests, & Cancellations" section of the [Community Guidelines](#) to ensure your event is planned in a timely manner. Requests for events with high-profile/polarizing speakers must be submitted via the SBEngaged event form at *least four weeks before the intended event date*. The [overview form](#) must be submitted at **least 3 weeks prior to the event** for review by your program advisor and Student Life Risk Management staff. These timeframes should be reflected when you eventually request space on our reservation software platform, [25Live](#).
- **Are there any clubs or departments that could be potential co-sponsors?** While not mandatory, collaborating with other organizations/departments can help share responsibilities, broaden the discourse on campus, and offer different ways to plan and run your event, making it more impactful.

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2. Reserve Space

Review the "Planning Timelines, Space Usage, Requests, & Cancellations" section of the [Community Guidelines](#) in advance to ensure your request is submitted on time. Review space availability in [25 Live](#) and submit a space reservation request. Some spaces may not be reservable via 25Live. For additional resources on requesting space for an event, [click here](#). Please note that this request is for space only and does not guarantee approval of the event. The further in advance you request, the more time you will have to plan.

3. Submit Your Event for Review on SB Engaged and Consult with Your Program Advisor

Once the space request is approved, submit an event form in [SBEngaged](#) following all applicable timelines. For further resources on creating an event form on SB Engaged, [click here](#). Your Program Advisor will review your event request and determine whether the event can be held in accordance with the current event guidelines.

- **Organizations are not to advertise events/event details (including performers, speakers, etc.) or proceed with purchase requests, contracts, etc., until their program advisor has approved them.**
- Requests must be submitted at least **four weeks before** the intended start date of your event. Feedback from references may be requested to ensure the service provider is a suitable partner for a student organization and will deliver the requested services. Depending on the nature and risk of your event, Student Life Risk Management may require an [overview form](#) to be submitted at **least 3 weeks prior to the event** for review. The information provided will help inform you of any security plans and/or resources that may need to be in place. **Submitting a form does not signify approval.** Student organizations must gain approval before proceeding with applicable payment/contractual obligations. Student leaders are not authorized to enter into agreements or sign contracts on behalf of their organization/USG/GSO. Individuals who enter into a contract or agreement without documented approval shall be solely responsible for any contractual requirements, including associated financial expenses.

Your Program Advisor will contact your organization to assist with event planning and risk management, setting your program up for success and ensuring adherence to policy. Additional resources will be provided if necessary to ensure the event runs smoothly. To ensure productive advising meetings, please come prepared to discuss all details submitted in the [overview form](#). The [overview form](#) outlines aspects, including but not limited to:

- An overview of your event
 - Who are you hoping to bring, what are they planning to discuss, and how are you planning to execute the event (e.g., logistics, run of show, etc.)?
- The intended date, time, and location of the program
- Anticipated attendance and intended audience (number of on-campus versus off-campus guests, etc.)
- Projected Budget and Expenses
 - Resources, risk management support, and other event needs, such as speaker contractual/rider requirements, may have associated costs. Consider your budget when planning.
 - Events using funds from the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) or Graduate Student Organization (GSO) must adhere to the corresponding financial bylaws.
 - Additional information on USG funding policies, procedures, and resources is available on their [website](#). Additional information on GSO funding policies, procedures, and resources is available on their [website](#).
- Risk Management & Staffing Plan

Last Updated: 7/2026

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- Considerations may be necessary to ensure the security and safety of the program, including, but not limited to, security/staffing support, ticketing, line/crowd control, capacity management, attendance tracking, and the speaker's contractual requirements (e.g., contract/rider, security, merchandise sales).
- Attendance must be taken. Instructions and options for attendance tracking are available in our [SBEngaged Guidelines](#). Pre-registration/ticketing/use of RSVPs is highly recommended and may be required.
- Resources/requirements for your event (Technology/Audiovisual Support from the speakers' rider/contract, Ticketing Services, etc.)
- Does this program require consultation with key stakeholders, such as Government Relations, University Police, Marketing/Communications, or other parties involved/impacted?
 - Program Advisors and Student Life Risk Management staff will connect organizations with the appropriate stakeholders to consider the “time, place, and manner” of the event, ensuring the program proceeds smoothly and safely. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to:
 - University Police and Enterprise Risk Management
 - Government and Community Relations
 - University Marketing and Communications
 - If you believe your event could create ideological disagreement or discord with another group on campus, reach out to them during the planning phase to gather their perspectives. Although not required to move forward, everyone is well served by establishing open lines of communication and considering others' viewpoints in our community. This approach aligns with Stony Brook's values of equality, civility, caring, responsibility, accountability, and respect for all. Being proactive may help the University support all students in their efforts to engage in meaningful discourse around the desired topic.

4. Discuss Logistics and Risk Management Plan with Program Advisor & Stakeholders

It is better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. When discussing your event with your Program Advisor and key stakeholders, a logistics and risk management plan will be developed to ensure a safe environment and a smooth experience.

Details to work through may include, but are not limited to:

- **Communication Strategy:** Use content notices and cautionary statements, whether spoken or printed, to alert students to the sensitive nature of material that will be presented, discussed, or viewed in class. Content notices are not intended to permit students to skip class or censor your material, but rather to give students the time to use strategies to decrease the harmfulness of encountering sensitive material.

Assistance may be needed in developing a strategy to promote and respond to student inquiries about your organization's event, as well as in handling media outreach. Your Program Advisor and Student Life Risk Management staff will coordinate with Marketing and Communications and Media Relations staff as needed to assist in this capacity.

You should also plan and develop your opening and closing remarks to frame the discussion and expectations (see “Day of/During Event” for more information).

- **Site Check:** Conduct a walkthrough of your event location to familiarize yourself with the space and ensure all necessary items are available.

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- **Day of Schedule and Contact Information:** Establish a schedule that allows everyone involved to easily access each task and the staff assigned to the event. A contact information sheet should be accessible to all parties involved to clarify roles and responsibilities and identify who to contact in the event of an emergency. To facilitate communication on the day, creating either a text message group or a Google Chat with all staff included is recommended to ensure easy reachability for questions or clarification about event execution.
- **Ticketing Systems:** Your organization may want to use a ticketing system to track attendance or manage entry capacity. This may be required based on an evaluation by your Program Advisor and Student Life Risk Management staff. Your Program Advisor can assist you in contracting this service (typically, a small fee is associated with it). Advance ticket sales and pickup should be encouraged to avoid line-control concerns on event day.
- **Staffing and Risk Management:** A staffing plan helps dictate the day's schedule and ensures all aspects of an event are covered. A staffing plan may include, but not be limited to:
 - **Day of Primary Contact:** Typically, this role is managed by the main event planner, who is responsible for ensuring that all event functions are supported, that the speaker arrives safely, and that the location is ready and equipped.
 - **Check-In:** Roles include verifying entry and tracking attendance at the door (i.e., collecting tickets/checking RSVP status/scanning Event Passes), managing lines, crowds, and capacity.
 - **Moderator and Mic Runners:** If your speaking event includes a Q&A session, assign a moderator to keep the order of questions and a couple of mic runners on each side of the room, taking turns giving attendees a platform to ask questions.
 - **Floater:** Having some staff hang around throughout the event is helpful if someone in an assigned role needs a break. Floaters are around to relieve others, but can also serve as a useful second set of eyes in the event of an incident or when someone needs help.
 - **Risk Management, University Police, and Contracted Security:** A speaker/event may require additional needs that stem beyond a location and technical resources such as ticketing, entry, and capacity management; line/crowd control; University Police/outside security presence in securing the event, ensuring the speaker arrives and leaves the location safely, and can effectively address the audience free from violence or disruption; managing a demonstration/protest should it occur, etc. Advance planning and coordination are needed to ensure proper coverage and support.

DAY OF/DURING EVENT

1. Day of Staffing and Logistics

Ensure that logistics for your event are clearly communicated to all involved parties. Arrive early at the venue to ensure the event set-up is complete.

- **Pre-Event Meeting:** Before audience members arrive, hold a pre-event meeting with all involved parties to discuss event execution and address any questions staff may have about the event or their specific duties. Pre-event meetings also allow members to be introduced to additional personnel (such as University Police and your speaker), review emergency exit procedures, and become familiar with items like attendance tracking. Ensure staff are positioned well in advance of the event doors opening.

2. Executing Your Event

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Here are some things to do before welcoming your speaker to execute their talk:

- **Welcoming Remarks and Intention of the Program:** Welcoming remarks thank your audience for attending, address any safety concerns, and ultimately introduce your speaker to the audience. In your welcoming remarks, it is essential to articulate why the group believes the event contributes to the campus community and why the speaker(s) have a particular perspective, expertise, or experience that will contribute to the conversation and consideration of the topic. Within your opening remarks, establish clear protocols for the event. Your role is to create a safe space for the flow of discourse and step in when a discussion gets off track or heated. Explain why discussing a potentially sensitive topic is important for their learning experience, and acknowledge that discomfort is a natural part of such discussions. Acknowledge that there will be differing perspectives and that everyone will come from different lived experiences, and recognize the effort attendees put into listening to and engaging with these difficult topics with curiosity and a goal of learning. Provide attendees with advance notice of the topics you will cover, allowing them to identify their needs and navigate the topics effectively. Clarify that the speaker's views are their own and should not be misconstrued as endorsed by the University, nor potentially even the sponsoring organization/s. Remind people that all members are expected to have the opportunity to hear the speaker's viewpoints and engage in open dialogue, even when those viewpoints are controversial or considered offensive by some members of our community. The University supports the creation of a “marketplace of ideas,” where speech that a person disagrees with is met with more speech that encourages engagement and debate.

To assist in framing and establishing expectations at your event, please feel free to use and modify this presentation template, titled [“Expectations, Reminders, & Resources.”](#)

For assistance in crafting language for your organization's opening remarks, please discuss with your Program Advisor, who can solicit support from University Marketing and Communications and other relevant departments as needed.

- **Discussion/Question-and-Answer Panel Protocol:** You may include a Discussion/Question-and-Answer (Q&A) period during the event. In your welcoming remarks, be specific about the time for the open discussion/Q&A and how it will be conducted. Delegating someone in your organization to serve as a moderator will help maintain the order of questions and keep speakers focused on answering them. Have microphone runners ready to maintain microphone control and ensure everyone can hear the speaker's questions.

Remind audience members of the expectations outlined in the welcoming remarks. Provide attendees with pragmatic tools on how to engage with each other, such as:

- Asking questions to understand the perspective of others instead of rushing to judgment as a reaction to something that was stated.
- Use “I” statements to express your perspective when experiencing a personal reaction to something that was said. Urge attendees to speak for themselves and listen to each other, respecting each other and the value of constructive discussion.
- If something is stated that hurts you, note the statement/phrasing that is hurtful and explain why, instead of blaming the person.
- Reposition polarizing or divisive comments as a topic for general discussion and an opportunity for learning.

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- For example, “Many people think this way. Why do they hold this view?” and “What is inaccurate or missing from this view? What are the implications?”
- **Concluding Your Event:** Be sure to have a strategy for closing the discussion. At the end of your event, be sure to thank your speaker (s) (if applicable) and attendees. Remind attendees of ways they can assist or take action. Ensure all final tasks are completed, including ensuring that any speakers/guests safely exit the building and that the space is clean and restored to its original condition.

AFTER THE EVENT

We advise you to reflect on your event at your earliest convenience to ensure the details are fresh. This can be done in many ways:

- **Follow up with your Program Advisor:** Provide feedback to your advisor, discussing what went well and any notes for improvement for future speakers or events.
- **Thank the Speaker for Attending:** Express your gratitude to the speaker for attending your event by sending a follow-up email or written note. This creates a good rapport with your organization, should you choose to utilize the speaker in the future.
- **Event Evaluation:** Draft and keep an evaluation in an accessible place for effective transitions amongst leadership in your organization and recordkeeping purposes, considering the following:
 - How did this event align with the mission and goals of your organization?
 - What was the attendance at your event? This can be pulled from SB Engaged.
 - What recommendations would help make this event even more successful in the future? What was the feedback from attendees, staff, and stakeholders?

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II. Public Demonstration & Protest Guidelines

Free speech and peaceful assembly are fundamental rights of citizens and are essential to the University as a center for open inquiry in the pursuit of knowledge and insight. The University is strongly committed to protecting the rights of all members of the campus community. However, these rights bring with them a concurrent obligation to maintain a campus atmosphere conducive to scholarly pursuits and respect for the rights of all individuals. Student organizations engaging in assemblies, demonstrations, and similar expressions of First Amendment rights must not infringe on the rights of others or disrupt the University's essential operations and functions. While exercising the right to public assembly, the [Code of Student Responsibility](#) and all other University policies remain in effect. Student organizations must operate within the bounds of University guidance on [Free Speech](#), the [Public Assembly Policy](#), and [SUNY Policy 3653: Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order](#). The University will not interfere with orderly assemblies in public areas of grounds and buildings unless participants:

- a. Prevent the orderly conduct of a University function or activity, such as lectures, meetings, interviews, ceremonies, and other public events.
- b. Obstruct the free movement of vehicles or of persons, including, but not limited to in any building or facility, inclusive of blocking hallways and doors. If a protest area is established by a University official(s), protesters are required to comply with these physical boundaries.
- c. Willfully cause injury or damage to persons or property.
- d. Willfully operate audio amplification equipment in a manner that conflicts with normal University operations or that is deemed injurious to health and safety.
- e. Jeopardize the safety and security of others, including, but not limited to, the presence of sticks, poles, or torches, which are prohibited.
- f. Without authorization from the University Police, occupy a building after it is normally closed.
- g. Without authorization from the Office of Campus Operations and Maintenance, construct structures, inclusive of objects requiring penetration in concrete or grass, or camp on University grounds.
- h. Violate the provisions of the [SUNY Policy 3653, titled Rules for Maintenance of Public Order](#).

To ensure the safety of participants and protect the rights of all campus community members, the University may provide services such as location, safety, crowd control, sound equipment, site preparation/cleanup, and/or other facilities or services it deems necessary. Assemblies for which services may be necessary should notify the University of their plans within a reasonable length of time before the planned event. Our goal is to support student organizations throughout the planning and execution process of such assemblies, ensuring they are conducted in a manner that is effective, safe, and in accordance with University policy.

The University has rules and regulations designed to prevent substantial disruption of educational activities, protect lawful access to campus programs and facilities, avoid unsafe behavior, and prevent the destruction of property. Their application does not vary according to the cause or content of a particular protest, speech, or other form of expression, and the rules and regulations are designed to enable opportunity for expressive activity.

Assemblies requiring no University services (i.e., location, safety, crowd control, sound equipment, site preparation/cleanup, and/or other such facilities/services) may occur without prior notification by the event sponsors

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and/or organizers. However, conformity with the specific campus regulations noted above is required. If you are unsure whether your assembly requires services, please consult your program advisor.

For additional information, please visit the [resources](#) and [FAQs](#) on the [University Free Speech website](#).

III. Discussions Involving Sensitive/Polarizing Topics

Stony Brook University (SBU) supports the efforts of recognized student organizations to broaden intellectual discourse on campus and promote a free exchange of ideas. The Office of Student Life aims to support student organizations in this work to ensure they understand relevant policies and procedures. SBU does not endorse any particular event, speaker, or position, but operates in a way informed by and in accordance with University policy.

Sensitive/polarizing topics can be extremely diverse and may include race and ethnicity, gender, age, nationality, sexuality, physical appearance, disability, socioeconomic status, politics, religion, genetic testing, evolution, immigration, grief, loss, trauma, and many more.

Not all potentially sensitive topics can be anticipated, just as not all topics listed above might stir up emotions or provoke reactions. However, preparing for when they arise will help create a climate of inclusive civil discourse. This guide is designed to help you prepare for potentially sensitive topics and to provide tips and strategies for facilitating discussions on them.

To best ensure a safe and successful program, please review these guidelines and seek additional support from your assigned Program Advisor and faculty/staff advisor (if applicable). Please reach out with any questions regardless of where you are in the planning process. We are happy to help and grateful to students who commit their time to fostering a free exchange of ideas on campus.

For additional information, please visit the [resources](#) and [FAQs](#) on the [University Free Speech website](#).

BEFORE THE EVENT

1. Brainstorm Your Event: Think Through Initial Plan

To ensure a smooth and well-organized event, take some time to think about what you hope to accomplish, brainstorm ideas, and research relevant plans and considerations.

When are you hoping to host this event? To ensure a successful event, ample and advanced planning is needed. Review the "Planning Timelines, Space Usage, Requests, & Cancellations" section of the [Community Guidelines](#) to ensure your event is planned in a timely manner.

Have you developed a rough outline of the event logistics and how you would like to execute your program? Your assigned program advisor can provide suggestions on how to run your event smoothly and ensure it is well-organized. We recommend organizations use these guidelines and the [planning checklist](#) to think through and prepare plans for the various aspects of the program. Additional information and resources are available below to help you plan your event.

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- **Are there any clubs or departments that could be potential co-sponsors?** While not mandatory, collaborating with other organizations/departments can help share responsibilities, broaden campus discourse, and offer alternative ways to plan and run your event, making it more impactful.

2. Reserve Space

Review the "Planning Timelines, Space Usage, Requests, & Cancellations" section of the [Community Guidelines](#) in advance to ensure your request is submitted on time. Review space availability in [25 Live](#) and submit a space reservation request. Some spaces may not be reservable via 25Live. For additional resources on requesting space for an event, [click here](#). Please note that this request for space does not guarantee approval of the event. The further in advance you request, the more time you will have to plan.

3. Submit Your Event for Review on SB Engaged and Consult with Your Program Advisor

Once the space request is approved, submit an event form in [SBEngaged](#) following all applicable timelines. For further resources on creating an event form on SB Engaged, [click here](#). Your Program Advisor will review your event request and determine whether the event can be held in accordance with the current event guidelines.

- **Organizations are not to advertise events/event details (including performers, speakers, etc.) or proceed with purchase requests, contracts, etc., until their program advisor has approved them.**
- **Submitting a request form does not signify approval.** Student organizations must gain approval before proceeding with applicable payment/contractual obligations. Student leaders are not authorized to enter into agreements or sign contracts on behalf of their organization/USG/GSO. Individuals who enter into a contract or agreement without documented approval shall be solely responsible for any contractual requirements, including associated financial expenses.

Your Program Advisor will contact your organization to assist with event planning and risk management, setting your program up for success and ensuring adherence to policy. Additional resources will be provided if necessary to ensure the event runs smoothly. To ensure productive advising meetings, we recommend that organizations utilize these guidelines and [planning checklist](#) to think through and prepare plans for the various aspects of the program. Things to work through include, but are not limited to:

- An overview of your event
 - What are you planning to discuss, and how are you planning to execute the event, i.e., logistics, run of show, etc.?
- The intended date, time, and location of the program
- Key Stakeholders and Opportunities for Collaboration
 - Does this program require consultation with key stakeholders, such as Government Relations, University Police, Marketing/Communications, or other parties involved/impacted?
 - Program Advisors will connect organizations with the appropriate stakeholders to consider the "time, place, and manner" of the event, ensuring the program proceeds smoothly and safely. Stakeholders may include, but are not limited to:
 - University Police and Enterprise Risk Management
 - Government and Community Relations
 - University Marketing and Communications
 - Are there content area experts or other clubs/departments that should be consulted and included in the planning? While not mandatory, collaborating with other organizations/departments can help with the sharing of responsibilities, contribute to expanding discourse on campus, and offer different ways to plan and run your event to be impactful

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- If you believe your event could create ideological disagreement or discord with another group on campus, reach out to them during the planning phase to gather their perspectives. Although not required to move forward, everyone is well served by establishing open lines of communication and considering others' viewpoints in our community. This approach aligns with Stony Brook's values of equality, civility, caring, responsibility, accountability, and respect for all. Being proactive may help the University support all students in their efforts to engage in meaningful discourse around the desired topic.
- Anticipated attendance and intended audience (number of on-campus versus off-campus guests, etc.)
- Projected Budget and Expenses
 - Resources, risk management support, and other event needs may have associated costs. Consider your budget when planning.
 - Events using funds from the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) or Graduate Student Organization (GSO) must adhere to the corresponding financial bylaws.
 - Additional information on USG funding policies, procedures, and resources is available on their [website](#). Additional information on GSO funding policies, procedures, and resources is available on their [website](#).
- Risk Management & Staffing Plan
 - Considerations may be necessary to ensure the security and safety of the program, including but not limited to security/staffing support, ticketing, line/crowd control, capacity management, and attendance tracking.
 - Attendance must be taken. Instructions and options for attendance tracking can be found on our [SBEngaged Guidelines](#). Pre-registration/ticketing/use of RSVPs is highly recommended.
- Resources for your event (Facilities, Technology/Audiovisual Support, or Ticketing Services)

4. Discuss Logistics and Risk Management Plan with Program Advisor & Stakeholders

It is better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. When discussing your event with your Program Advisor and key stakeholders, a logistics and risk management plan will be developed to ensure a safe environment and a smooth experience.

Details to work through may include, but are not limited to:

- **Communication Strategy:** Content notices/cautionary statements alert attendees to the sensitive nature of the material to be presented, which is essential for prospective attendees to plan accordingly.

Assistance may be needed in developing a strategy to promote and respond to student inquiries about your organization's event, as well as in handling media outreach. Your Program Advisor will coordinate with Marketing and Communications and Media Relations staff as needed to assist in this capacity.

You should also plan and develop your opening and closing remarks to frame the discussion and expectations (see *"Day of/During Event"* for more information).

- **Site Check:** Conduct a walkthrough of your event location to familiarize yourself with the space and ensure all necessary items are available.
- **Day-of Schedule and Contact Information:** Establish a schedule and contact sheet so everyone involved has easy access to key information, including roles and responsibilities for all parties and emergency

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contact information. To facilitate communication on the day, it is recommended to create either a text message group or a Google Chat for questions or clarification regarding event execution.

- **Ticketing Systems:** Your organization may want to use a ticketing system to track attendance or manage capacity. This may be required based on an evaluation by your Program Advisor. Your Program Advisor can assist you in contracting this service (typically, a small fee is associated with it). Advance ticket sales and pickup should be encouraged to avoid line-control concerns on event day.
- **Staffing and Risk Management:** A staffing plan helps dictate the day's schedule and ensures all aspects of an event are covered. A staffing plan may include, but not be limited to:
 - **Day of Primary Contact:** Typically, this role is managed by the main event planner, who is responsible for ensuring that all event functionalities are supported and the location is ready and equipped.
 - **Check-In:** Roles include verifying entry and tracking attendance at the door (i.e., collecting tickets/checking RSVP status/scanning Event Passes), managing lines, crowds, and capacity.
 - **Moderator and Mic Runners:** If your event includes a Q&A session, assign a moderator to maintain the order of questions and designate a couple of mic runners on each side of the room, taking turns giving attendees a platform to ask questions.
 - **Floater:** Having some staff hang around throughout the event is helpful if someone in an assigned role needs a break. Floaters are around to relieve others, but can also serve as a useful second set of eyes in the event of an incident or when someone needs help.
 - **Risk Management, University Police, and Contracted Security:** Your event may require additional needs that stem beyond a location and technical resources such as ticketing, entry, and capacity management; line/crowd control; University Police/outside security presence in securing the event, ensuring speakers/guests arrive and leave the location safely, and can effectively address the audience free from violence or disruption; managing a demonstration/protest should it occur, etc. Advance planning and coordination are needed to ensure proper coverage and support.

DAY OF/DURING EVENT

1. Day of Staffing and Logistics

Ensure that logistics for your event are clearly communicated to all involved parties. Arrive early at the venue to ensure the event set-up is complete.

- **Pre-Event Meeting:** Before audience members arrive, hold a pre-event meeting with all involved parties to discuss event execution and address any questions staff may have about the event or their specific duties. Pre-event meetings also allow members to be introduced to additional personnel (University Police, speakers, co-sponsors, etc.), review emergency exit procedures, and become familiar with items such as attendance tracking. Ensure staff are positioned well in advance of doors opening.

2. Executing Your Event

Here are some things to do before beginning your event:

- **Welcoming Remarks and Program Intention:** Welcoming remarks thank the audience for attending, address any safety concerns, and ultimately introduce the speaker(s) to the audience. In your welcoming remarks, it is important to articulate why the group believes the event contributes to the campus

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community. If hosting a speaker, discuss why the speaker(s) have a particular perspective, expertise, or experience contributing to the conversation and consideration of the topic. Within your opening remarks, establish clear protocols for the event. Your role is to create a safe space for the flow of discourse and step in when a discussion gets off track or heated. Explain why discussing a potentially sensitive topic is important for their learning experience, and acknowledge that discomfort is a natural part of such discussions. Acknowledge that there will be differing perspectives and that everyone will come from different lived experiences, and recognize the effort attendees put into listening to and engaging with these difficult topics with curiosity and a goal of learning. Provide attendees with advance notice of the topics you will cover, allowing them to identify their needs and navigate the topics effectively. Clarify that the views discussed should not be misconstrued as endorsed by the University or potentially even the sponsoring organization/s. Remind people that all members are expected to have the opportunity to hear the viewpoints discussed and engage in open dialogue, even when those viewpoints are controversial or considered offensive by some members of our community. The University supports the creation of a “marketplace of ideas,” where speech that a person disagrees with is met with more speech that encourages engagement and debate.

To assist in framing and establishing expectations at your event, please feel free to use and modify this presentation template, titled “[Expectations, Reminders, & Resources](#).”

For assistance in crafting language for your organization's opening remarks, please discuss with your Program Advisor, who can solicit support from University Marketing and Communications and other relevant parties.

- **Discussion/Question-and-Answer Panel Protocol:** During the event, you may include a Discussion/Question-and-Answer (Q&A) period. In your welcoming remarks, be specific about the time for the open discussion/Q&A and how it will be conducted. Delegating someone in your organization to serve as a moderator will help maintain the order of questions and keep speakers focused on answering them. Have microphone runners ready to maintain microphone control and ensure everyone can hear the speaker's questions.

Remind audience members of the expectations outlined in the welcoming remarks. Provide attendees with pragmatic tools on how to engage with each other, such as:

- Asking questions to understand the perspective of others instead of rushing to judgment as a reaction to something that was stated.
 - Use “I” statements to express your perspective when experiencing a personal reaction to something that was said. Urge attendees to speak for themselves and listen to each other, respecting each other and the value of constructive discussion.
 - If something is stated that hurts you, note the statement/phrasing that is hurtful and explain why, instead of blaming the person.
 - Reposition polarizing or divisive comments as a topic for discussion and an opportunity for learning.
 - For example, “Many people think this way. Why do they hold this view?” and “What is inaccurate or missing from this view? What are the implications?”
- **Concluding Your Event:** Be sure to have a strategy for closing the discussion. At the end of your event, thank your speaker(s), if applicable, and your attendees. Remind attendees of ways they can assist or

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take action. Ensure all final tasks are completed, including ensuring that any speakers/guests safely exit the building and that the space is clean and restored to its original condition.

AFTER THE EVENT

We advise you to reflect on your event at your earliest convenience to ensure the details are fresh. This can be done in many ways:

- **Follow up with your Program Advisor:** Provide feedback to your advisor, discussing what went well and any notes for future improvement.
- **If speakers/panelists were hosted, thank them for attending.** Thank your speaker(s) for attending your event by sending a follow-up email or a written note. This builds a good rapport with your organization, should you choose to work with them in the future.
- **Event Evaluation:** Draft and keep an evaluation in an accessible place for effective transitions amongst leadership in your organization and recordkeeping purposes, considering the following:
 - How did this event align with the mission and goals of your organization?
 - What was the attendance at your event? This can be pulled from SB Engaged.
 - What recommendations would help make this event even more successful in the future? What was the feedback from attendees, staff, and stakeholders?

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IV. Student Life Process and Workflow

- Student Life receives information/requests for events/protests (informally or via 25Live/SB Engaged)
- Student Life follows up to gather more information from the student organization
 - Reference checks are completed for speaker requests when applicable via SB Engaged
 - Student Life notifies Marketing & Communications, Government Relations & University Police (UPD)/Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) when a group is planning to invite a political speaker to campus
- UPD, ERM, and other key stakeholders (including Media Relations, Marketing and Communications, and Government Relations) are consulted when planning high-profile speakers, protests, and other events. Such collaboration will result in a finalized, approved event risk management plan.
- Day-of-staffing presence and procedures are coordinated among SEA/Student Life staff and UPD/ERM (when applicable).
 - Professional staff, outside security, and University police may be called upon to actively maintain an environment of spirited and open discourse and debate, allowing all participants to contribute to the intellectual exchange and fully participate in the event, in accordance with the University's commitment to free expression.
 - SEA/Student Life staff support student organizations and liaise with University Police, Building Managers, contracted security, and other relevant parties. Staff is on-site as needed to ensure that University policies and procedures are followed and may intervene as necessary to assist the organization in safely and effectively executing the event and resolving any issues that may arise. The number of staff and roles varies depending on the nature of the event. Still, typical roles include working with event organizers to ensure they understand the policy, collaborating with counter-protestors and UPD to locate and contain the counter-protest area, and so on.

V. Resources

- [Community Guidelines for Recognized Student Organizations](#)
- [Code of Student Responsibility](#)
- [Campus Events/Activities & Demonstrations Guide](#)
- [Event Planning & Organizational Management How-To's](#)
- [Free Speech FAQ's](#)
- [Free Speech Resources](#)
- [General Event Checklist Template](#)
- [Presentation Template for Expectations for Engagement at Events](#)
- [Freedom of Expression Rights & Responsibilities Palm Cards](#)
- [High Profile Speaker Event Overview](#)
- [High Profile/Polarizing Speaker, & Sensitive/Polarizing Topics Event Planning Checklist](#)
- [Information on Event Requests & Reservations](#)

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