



Event Planning 101

The best events are those where good preparation is supported by clear communication. There are groups and campus events taking place daily, so it is important to provide our office with ample lead time on any type of event you wish to host. Proper planning allows for successful events, and our most successful groups create calendars of events for each year. We recommend that events be decided on at the beginning of the fiscal year in order to send postcard updates late summer on what is still to come the rest of the year/next calendar year.

Things to keep in mind-

- Purpose: What are our goals for this event? Socializing, networking, academic interests, community engagement/service project, etc.?
- Audience: Who will attend this event? What is the best way to engage this group? What strategies should the group employ for this target group which will maximize the event's success?
- Timelines: When is the best time to host this event? How much time before the event do we need to have details confirmed? How much time does the Wittenberg Communication Team need to effectively promote the event?
- Communication: What is the best way to get word out about this event? Should we host a registration page? Will there be a cost associated with attending?

Event Planning Advice-

- Be realistic. You should not plan an event just to plan one. Fewer well-planned events are better than many haphazard ones.
- Be consistent. Traveling from one place to another for game watches can confuse people. Do the proper work in the beginning and keep plan details as consistent as possible.
- Be resilient. Not every event is going to have 100 people attend. That is okay! We consider any alumni engagement a success, and we value the demanding work you put into your group events. Find what works best for your area and group.

Remember to-

- Wear Wittenberg colors.
- Take a lot of pictures (and email them to alumni@wittenberg.edu after the event!)
- Thank everyone as many times as possible.
- Have vegetarian/vegan/gluten free meals available.
- Provide nametags.
- Check on parking availability and communicate plan to attendees.

Group Event Examples

Be creative! Take part in the local flair of your community!
Have fun and take lots of pictures!

Not sure where to begin? Here are some ideas to help you brainstorm:

Social Networking Events

- Happy Hours
- Holiday Socials
- Block seats to a local event

Sports Affiliated Events

- Game watch parties
- Group activities at local professional and minor league sports events
- Block tickets at athletic games when teams come to your area

Family Friendly Events

- Cookouts
- Trips to a local zoo or aquarium
- Day at the park or museum

Academic Focused Events

- Book Clubs
- Trivia Nights
- Inviting a guest speaker for a luncheon

Multicultural Events Community

- Festivals
- Parades

Service Events

- Community service/service days
- Park Clean Up
- Volunteering at a local shelter, food bank, etc.

Young Alumni Events

- Homecoming Tailgate Tent

Additional Ideas/Focus Areas:

1. Education/ Professional Networking
 - a. Guest speakers, job postings in the online community
2. Alumni Outreach/Engagement
 - a. Reception prior to or in conjunction with performance, games, etc.
 - b. Day at a Park, Zoo
 - c. Wine Tasting/Beer Tasting
3. Bring alumni and students together
 - a. Coordinate events on an annual basis to bring alumni and students together for the purposes of networking, mentoring or panel discussions
 - b. Alumni student recruitment
4. Establish or enhance financial support for the university
 - a. Establish a society or network scholarship fund
 - b. Fundraise to support existing scholarship/program funds
 - c. Encourage society or network supporters to donate annually to the society or network fund or any Wittenberg University Scholarship fund
5. Community Service (define and qualify the organizations to be chosen).
 - a. Can be for school, department, or locally in your area in the name of the network/society

Ideal Event Planning Schedule

Twelve Weeks Prior to Event:

- All details of the event should be in place 10-12 weeks (about 3 months) before the event. Have your event locations booked, format planned, cost established, etc.
- Start promoting the event. It takes six to eight weeks to create registration forms, send emails, promote on social media, and send direct mail pieces (if necessary) Add an extra four weeks for responses so that there will be adequate participation.
- Submit information to be printed in alumni publications. Information must be received prior to the deadline for materials.
- Request lists. When requesting lists and alumni counts, make sure you specify geographic areas (zip codes, city, county, etc.) and whether you want all alumni.

Six to Eight Weeks Prior to Event:

- Send emails and/or send bulk mail. It can take three weeks for bulk mail to be disseminated. Any mailing over 200 pieces can be sent at the bulk rate.
- Market the event, post on social media, call your friends- GET THE WORD OUT!

Two Weeks Prior to Event:

- RSVP deadline. Plan to have mailings reach alumni at least two weeks before the event. This gives them time to make plans and RSVP before the deadline.
- Confirm reservations, menu, etc.
- Print name tags.
- Request any supplies from the Alumni Relations team.

Day of Event:

- Arrive about an hour before the event starts to make sure everything is set up correctly
- Record accurate attendance
- Take pictures

Day After:

- Send list of attendees and pictures to (alumni@wittenberg.edu)
- Do a thank you post on group social media page.

Contact Information -

Office of Alumni Relations – alumni@wittenberg.edu

Alumni Communication Channel -

