Eight Steps to Programming

1. Needs and Interests Assessment:
People will not attend programs if they are not interested in the topic. As yourself several questions:
- Who’s your audience? Would these students typically enjoy this type of program?
- What are the audience needs?
- How do you determine what the interest and needs are? You can use various methods of assessments (e.g. word of mouth, surveys, focus groups)

2. Choose a Program Topic:
Now that you know what the target audience is interested in, choose a program topic
- What needs stand out from your assessment?
- What needs take high priority?
- Use the creativity of your committee to come up with great ideas.
- Some events are brand new creations and others are just a matter of building on programs previously done.
- Once you come up with your ideas, “test market” those ideas by asking your friends or other students to see if it’s something they would come to.

3. Choose a Program Type
Programming can take many forms; consider the following:
- Case study (an example of an event or problem to which participants respond)
- Discussions (ex. Panel, Lecture & Roundtable)
- Entertainment (i.e. Comedian, games, roving artists, etc.)
- Interactive – arts and crafts
- “Passive” Educational Activities (bulletin boards, pamphlets, quotes, statistics, etc.)
- Structured Activities (team builders, thought provoking experiences)

4. Planning the Logistics:
This is the who, what, when, where, and why and how part. Determine a timeline working in the reverse: start at the day of the event and fill in marketing and other logistical deadlines backwards. Here are some of the logistics for you to consider...
- Event Name: What’s in a name? Everything! Get people fired up about coming!
- Program Description and Goals: How will this meet needs and interests of students?
- Possible Date(s): Make sure to check with other people to see if any dates might conflict with other events.
- Location: Scheduling a location is vital to the success of your program. A room can determine audience capacity, date and time. It can also set the mood for formal, informal, or auditorium style programming. Is the space large enough? Is the space available? Is
the room free or is there a fee? Do you need to reserve a rain site? How will the room need to be set up?

- **Cost:** Establish a budget. Budgets help to establish guidelines for spending and help you determine the amount of fundraising or resource finding you will need to accomplish. Ask yourself, how are you funding your program? Have you arranged for these funds?
- **Support:** Shop your idea around to campus departments, student organizations, or businesses that might be interested in co-sponsoring the event. Co-sponsorship doesn’t always mean financial contributions. Sometimes promotional or volunteer support, a guaranteed audience, or a donation of goods and services, or a strategic collaboration can be just as valuable as a check.
- **Booking:** Research, select, and make contact with the performer(s) and come to an agreement on a date, time, and fee.
- **Hotel/Travel Arrangements:** If necessary, make any hotel or travel arrangements.
- **Supplies Needed:** Things like decorations or special equipment needed. Be sure to leave enough time to purchase supplies to avoid last minute spending right before the program begins.
- **Food/Beverages:** Are you having food or drinks at the event? How much? What types? Who is your supplier? What is the cost? Do you need ice? Do you need plates, cups, or utensils?
- **Volunteer Assistance:** Are volunteers needed? How many? What will their responsibilities be? How will they be contacted? By when? Is special training necessary? Who will coordinate them during the event?

5. **Marketing**
A program’s success can be linked to the success and originality of marketing. Effective advertising involves more than just creating a flyer. The best way to market is to be creative and use multiple ways to get the word out. Think about how do most students find out about events and be sure to cover these bases.

As your event date gets closer, use the 7-3-1 rule; marketing should be done in three waves: one week, or (7) days prior to the event, (3) days prior and the day (1) of the event.

6. **Implementation**
This involves actually putting on the program. Consider all the necessary arrangements and efforts for setting up the program. Here are some things to think about:

- **Set-up:** Arrive early to set-up the room and arrange it accordingly. Are all of the supplies needed there? Are there any last minute changes that need to be made? Is the sound and equipment working properly? Is the food setup and drinks cold? Is there signage needed to direct people to your location or organize crowds?
- **Check the Volunteers:** Did they arrive? Understand their responsibility? In place?
- **Introduce Presenter(s):** Name, credentials, and program topic and presentation
- **Be attentive:** Model good “audience behavior” and encourage people to participate.
- **Clean up:** Return room in its original set-up, clean the room, remove trash if necessary.
7. **Evaluation**
Think about the job you have done and review any formal evaluations that you may have distributed and collected to participants.
Also do a self-evaluation of our committee or event planners:
- What went well?
- What would you do differently?

8. **Closure**
- Send thank you notes, make sure all of your financial aspects are squared away, and compile a notebook, folder or binder to pass along for historical purposes and to help future event chairs!