

## Harding Event Planning Checklist

This checklist is designed to support your efforts in organizing campus events and to better connect you with our abundant campus resources. Before planning any event, the following details need to be carefully considered.

### Pre-planning

- 1. Define the event**
  - What kind of event is it? (conference, celebration, dedication, fundraiser, etc.)
  - What is the purpose?
  - How will you measure success?
  - Is permission required? Who will approve the event plan?
  
- 2. Choose a date and time**
  - Are there any potential conflicts with holidays or other Harding events?
  - Check the [Harding calendar](#), [academic calendars](#) and [composite sports calendar](#).
  - Are there other events happening around the same time that could provide marketing or collaboration opportunities?
  
- 3. Determine a budget**
  - What is your total event budget?
  - Consider venue (and cleaning fees), catering, decorations, marketing, entertainment, and travel, food, and lodging for guest speakers.
  
- 4. Choose a venue**
  - How many people are invited?
  - Does the venue allow for appropriate space, tables, chairs, A/V equipment, etc?
  - To reserve event spaces on campus, visit [Pipeline>Administrative>Reservations for buildings/rooms/parks](#)
  - Visit the venue to ensure it will provide for your needs.
  
- 5. Determine a theme or color scheme for the event.**
  - Plan decorations and signage according to the theme.
  
- 6. Guest list and invitations**
  - Create a guest list and gather contact information.
  - Email [alumni@harding.edu](mailto:alumni@harding.edu) to request an alumni or parent address or email list.
  - Provide at least three touch points ahead of the event: mail, call, social media, email, etc.

- Send out invitations well in advance through email, physical mail, or online platforms.

#### 7. Catering and menu

- For events on campus, [visit Bison Catering by Chartwells](#).  
Decide on the menu (options for beverages, appetizers, main courses and desserts).  
Consider dietary restrictions and preferences.
- For a formal event, consider asking for a taste test ahead of time.
- Will the caterers clean up after the event, or are you responsible for gathering volunteers?
- Provide water for guests of outdoor events. Bring your own or order from Chartwells.

#### 8. Entertainment and activities:

- Plan entertainment options (music, performances, games) that align with the event's theme.
- Arrange any necessary equipment or props for activities.
- Consider guest speakers or performers and secure their attendance.
- Contact Cindy Hunter at [president@harding.edu](mailto:president@harding.edu) to request the president's participation (months in advance, if possible).
- Before signing any contract with a performer, please send for review to A/V, building manager and safety and risk specialist.

#### 9. Event Promotion

- For events with external audiences (alumni, community, donors, prospective students, etc.), UCM can help develop a marketing plan including social media coverage, websites, flyers, email, signage, photography, programs, menu, news coverage, certificates/plaques, etc.

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**Before** meeting with UCM to develop a marketing plan, please prepare answers to the following questions:

- What is the purpose of this event?
- What is your budget?
- What is the title, date, time, location, audience of your event?
- Who are the speakers/performers?
  - Have you already asked the speakers to participate?
  - Provide a high-resolution photo of each speaker. [Photo guidelines](#)

- What information do you want in the event program?
- Do you have a guest list with contact information?
- Provide a shot list of both staged and candid photos you want taken at the event.
  - If this is a recurring event, consider how you'll use the photos to promote the next event.
- Discuss possible media attendance
- What is the return on investment for this event? How will you measure it?
- Do you need to add or update any permanent signage in your building before the event?
- If this is a public event, did you add your event to the Harding Calendar?

**\*For internal events**, UCM will consult, but you'll need a DIY plan. UCM has provided tools including PowerPoint templates and the University's branding guide that can be found at [harding.edu/ucm](http://harding.edu/ucm).

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## Implementation

### A. Registration and Ticketing

- How will your guests RSVP?
  - Google form
  - Hardingtickets.com (Contact Joanna Crisco at [jcrisco@harding.edu](mailto:jcrisco@harding.edu))
- Is there reserved or VIP seating?
- Monitor registrations and ticket sales regularly.

### B. Set up the physical space

- Contact Aramark to ensure the room is clean ahead of time including taking out trash and recycling.
  - Contact Aramark to reserve tables, chairs, tablecloths, tents, lighting, outdoor trash cans, stages, podiums, chairs.
    - How many chairs will you need?
- Contact the physical resources department to provide stage decorations.
- Contact the physical resources department to install any signs or banners ahead of the event.
- Contact the physical resources department to adjust the room temperature two hours before the event.
- Contact the physical resources department to mow the grass and clean up landscaping around the venue. For outdoor events, ask them to turn off the automatic sprinklers during the event.
- Contact the department of public safety to turn off water features if necessary.

### C. Audio/Visual equipment:

- What equipment will you need for presentations, speeches and entertainment?
- Contact audio/visual production at 501-279-5200 or [av@harding.edu](mailto:av@harding.edu) to provide microphones, speakers, podium, projector and screen, etc.
- Test all equipment before the event to avoid technical issues.
- Contact Mark Prior if you plan to record the event.

### D. Logistics:

- Plan transportation and parking arrangements for attendees.
- Organize seating arrangements and room layout.
- Confirm guest speakers' travel and lodging arrangements and make recommendations for appropriate attire
- Contact the office of parking and transformation and public safety to inform them of your event and make plans for parking, traffic flow, security, etc.
- Also inform the president's office and the Heritage Inn

### E. Event Day Schedule and notes:

- Create a detailed event day schedule, including timing for registration, sessions, breaks and meals. Share the schedule with staff, speakers and volunteers.
  - How long is the entire program?
  - How long should each speaker or presenter have?
  - Do your speakers need scripts or talking points?
  - The point person needs a copy of the talking points and the schedule to keep the event on track.
  - The point person should arrive an hour before the event begins.
  - The point person for the event needs cell phone numbers for all volunteers and employees involved.
  - If the event is outdoors, bring towels to clean/dry chairs that were set up the night before.

### F. Staff and Volunteers:

- Recruit and train event staff and volunteers
- Assign roles such as registration, ushering and handling technology needs, welcome committee
- Employees should wear name tags and bring business cards if appropriate. Consider Harding branded or specific event attire for volunteers.
- Consider using the VOMO app for volunteer sign up
- Volunteers should encourage guests to follow your office/department and Harding University on social media and invite them back to campus for the next major Harding event. ([harding.edu/calendar](http://harding.edu/calendar))

### G. Event Materials:

- Prepare event materials such as name badges, programs, handouts and signage.

#### **H. Contingency Plan**

- Reserve an indoor backup venue for all outdoor events.
- Consider a backup plan for overflow of more guests than expected.
- Have backup solutions for technical difficulties, weather changes, or any unforeseen situations.

#### **I. Follow-up:**

- Send out thank you notes to attendees, speakers, sponsors and volunteers.
- Share information about the next event.
- Collect feedback to improve future events.
- Schedule a recap meeting with key players to consider what went well and what can be improved for future events.

#### **J. Post-Event Evaluation**

- Assess the event's success against its objectives and budget.
- Review what went well and what could be improved for future reference.

#### **Campus events contact information:**

Aramark facilities — Douglas Lackey: 501-279-7494

Aramark tables and chairs reservation — Marcus Barnett: 501-279-7495

Audio/visual production: 501-279-5200 or [av@harding.edu](mailto:av@harding.edu)

Building/rooms/parks reservations: [Pipeline>Administrative>Reservations for buildings/rooms/parks](#)

Chartwells

Greg Chaffin, interim senior director of food services, 580-748-1648

Amber Worlow, director of dining services, 501-279-4022

David Miller, senior director of catering, 501-279-4203

Stephanie Lisemby, catering coordinator, 501-279-4342

Department of Public Safety: 501-279-5000 or [dps@harding.edu](mailto:dps@harding.edu)

Office of the President — Cindy Hunter: [president@harding.edu](mailto:president@harding.edu)

Parking and Transportation — 501-279-4005 or [parking@harding.edu](mailto:parking@harding.edu)

Physical Resources Department: 501-279-4339