

St. John's University
150th Anniversary Celebration

Getting Started With Your Planning

Questions to Ask Before You Begin:

The questions below may assist you as you begin the planning process for your event. These will help provide a framework as the event develops and evolves, and will help with a focused direction and effective use of resources. Well-organized and well-executed events provide opportunities to build on and strengthen the positive reputation of St. John's University.

Goals and Objectives:

- What are the key goals and objectives of this event as it relates to the 150th and/or engagement?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the desired outcome and what do you want your guests to take away from this experience?
- How will you gauge the effectiveness of your event? (client/audience survey, statistical data)

Planning and Programming:

- Who will be the lead producer on this event?
- What day of the week will this event be held? (consider your audience when choosing date/time i.e. Monday's are difficult for attendance, consider traffic when selecting time of day, consider your catering budget when selecting time of day)
- What type of event is this? (meeting, reception, dinner, performance, etc.)
- What are your program elements? (speakers, format, video, A/V, performers, catering, etc.)
- In what order will your program elements flow?
- What is your available budget and from where are the funds coming?
- Are VIPs invited and if so, who will handle the event flow logistics?

Budget:

Before planning your event, determine your budget for the entire event and from where the funds will come. If using University funds, all contracts and agreements are with St. John's University, and procurement will need to sign the documents. Keep in mind that some of your vendors may require deposits.

Some things to consider for the budget:

- Venue Costs. Depending on where you host the event, the cost of the space can vary greatly.
- First Class Postage and mail house fees
- Print items. These may include invitations, programs, registration materials, signs, etc.
- Public Safety. This may include requesting per diems for event security or transportation on campus for guests. Please note, additional charges may apply.
- Catering. This may be the largest part of your budget and may include catering staff and catering equipment rentals
- Rentals of tables, chairs, staging
- Décor. You may use linens, flowers, lighting, balloons, musicians, etc.
- IT Classroom Support - A/V Services. These costs can be small if you only have a computer, podium, microphone, and projection, but can get quite large if you have to add multiple screens, sound systems, A/V techs, etc. Make sure you only order what you really need.
- VIP guests. You may need gifts, accommodations, travel, etc.
- Staffing
- Photography/Videography/Writer
- Giveaways

Timeline:

In order to keep organized and on track, create a timeline with key items.

Some items to include in your timeline:

- Selecting a venue, and finalizing contracts, if applicable
- Creating invitee lists
- Sending out invitations
- Establish communication follow up dates
- Determine who will be responsible for RSVPs and how will RSVPs be collected
- Determining parking needs
- Choosing caterers and finalizing contracts
- Selecting linens and flowers
- Contacting speakers/presenters
- Develop program and timing for event
- Determining AV needs and secure services
- Creating and delivering briefings and scripts if applicable
- Determine if name badges will be needed and if so, who will prepare
- Consider staffing needs and assign people to all roles (don't forget post event clean up staff)
- Create a day of timeline to include who is responsible for each action item
- Ordering giveaways, if applicable
- Consider media/press coverage
- Prepare event supplies (consider extension cords, flip charts, markers, tape, scissors, easels)
- Duplicate hand out materials

Logistics:

- Have you reserved your location?
- If food and beverages are planned, have you reserved catering? Have you considered dietary needs?
- Have you identified your A/V needs and who will be providing them?
- Where will your guests park?
- Have you designed your space layout? (tables, chairs, stage, registration, food prep)
- Will you need photography or videography or a writer?
- Who will be managing the registration lists?
- Will VIPs be invited and if so, who will be the point person?
- How will you accommodate special needs?
- How many people will you need to staff the event, and have you identified who they will be?
- Will you need to order plaques, awards, speaker gifts, etc.?

You can use the Event Planning Checklist to keep track of your event planning.

Invite List/Guest Management:

When creating the guest list for your event, you will want to consider who you are trying to reach and the purpose of the event. If you are trying to raise money, you may want to include someone from the donor relations team to the planning meetings. Keep in mind that you want to invite donors with an interest in the area of your event, i.e. if your event is a performance, you will want donors who are interested in the arts, not necessarily donors who are involved in the sciences. Early on, decide who will be managing the guest list, what information you want to capture about each guest, and what you will do with the information in the guest list. You will also want to determine if there are any "VIP" guests – these are guests who will require special attention based on their past giving, position within their company/government, they are a speaker/presenter, etc. There should only be a few select VIPs as it is easy to start thinking everyone should be VIP.

- Create a guest list, compile appropriate mailing data
- Save the Date – depending on the event, you may find this is helpful
- Invitations – electronic or print, if print ensure you mail them early enough
- RSVPs – who is tracking these? Will you do follow up calls/emails to non-responders?
- Order materials needed for nametags and check on type of nametag, format, badge holders
 - Paper for nametags

- Nametag holders
- Cases for nametags
- Ribbons
- Create nametags
- Registration list to record accepted guests
- Final attendee list of guests who attended

If there are true VIP guests:

- Do you need to assign a host to greet them?
- Do you need to arrange for transportation (air, car, train, etc.)?
- Do you need to arrange for a hotel room?
- Do you need a welcome/thank you gift?
- Do you reserved seating for them or their guests?
- Will you need to secure special parking?

Communications:

- How are you going to invite your audience? (print invitation, email invitation, social media, etc.)
- After the invitation, how will you promote your event? (social media, email follow ups, website, fliers, etc.)

Types of communications to consider:

- Save the Date Card
- Printed Invite Packet
- Letters
- Online Registration Form
- E-Communications (Initial, Reminder, Thank You)
- Today @ St. John's
- Social Networking Sites
- Surveys
- Scripts and remarks for program participants and speakers
- Printed programs

Work with your Marketing and Communications Account Director to create communication schedules.

Requesting Data Pulls:

Alumni Data – Send requests for Alumni data, to Lisa Capone at caponel@stjohns.edu and Mark Andrews at andrewsm@stjohns.edu.

Employee Data – Send requests for Employee data, to Delores Mencarelli at smithd@stjohns.edu.

On Campus Space:

Submit the Room Request Form from Conference Services.

- Queens Campus (<http://stj.formstack.com/forms/queens>)
- Staten Island Campus (http://stj.formstack.com/forms/staten_island)
- Manhattan Campus (<http://stj.formstack.com/forms/Manhattan>)
- Long Island Graduate Center (<http://stj.formstack.com/forms/LIGC>)

Work with Conference Services to discuss your floor plan and Facilities requests.

When booking your space, consider what the layout of your event will be:

- **Conference and Hollow Square:** Appropriate for interactive discussions and note-taking sessions for fewer than 25 people.
- **U-shape:** Appropriate for groups of fewer than 40 people. These are best for interaction with a leader seated at the head of the setup. Audiovisual equipment is usually set up at the open end of the seating.

- **Ovals and rounds:** Generally used for meals and sessions involving small group discussions. A five-foot-round table seats eight people comfortably. A six-foot-round table seats 10 people comfortably.
- **Theater:** Appropriate for large sessions and short lectures that do not require extensive note taking. This is a convenient setup to use before breaking into discussion or role-playing groups because chairs can be moved.
- **Lecture or Classroom:** The most desirable setup for medium to large-size lectures. This configuration requires a relatively large room. Tables provide attendees with space for spreading out materials and taking notes.

You will also need to consider if you need additional spaces: catering prep area, a green room, breakout rooms, registration, coat check, etc. Equipment can be requested on the Room Request Form:

- Tables
- Chairs
- Podium
- Coat Rack
- Additional Trash Cans
- Stage/Platform

For questions regarding on campus space, reach out the Campus Contacts:

Queens Campus

Each department has its own Conference Services Representative

Staten Island Campus

Eilean Kosinski, Campus Facilities Operations Manager
 kosinske@stjohns.edu
 (718) 390 4406

Manhattan Campus

Rianna Dyal, Facilities Supervisor
 dyalr@stjohns.edu
 (212) 277-5177

Catering:

Know your budget, which will help with their suggestions. Consider if your meal is sit down or buffet. If sit down, do you want the first course preset? This keeps the event moving if you have a speaker or if people are coming in at different times.

Some other considerations include: water on the podium/table for each speaker, table numbers, vendor meals, special dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, Kosher, gluten-free), etc. Once you place your catering order, the caterer will send you an agreement which is a complete summary of the event. Check your agreement carefully for date, start times, setup times, locations, number of guests, meals ordered and any other details that you are expecting. You also need to explain to your caterer that they are responsible for cleaning up and removing all of their trash after the event.

When ordering catering for on-campus events, contact Chartwells for proposals and suggestions.

Queens Campus

Robert Freglette Robert.Freglette@compass-usa.com (718) 990-2975

Clara Pinero Clara.Pinero@compass-usa.com (718) 990-2976

Staten Island Campus

Frank Gamba

Frank.Gamba@compass-usa.com

(718) 990-4376

Manhattan Campus

Please contact the Conference Services Facilities Supervisor for a list of approved caterers.

Rianna Dyal

dyalr@stjohns.edu

(212) 277-5177

If you are planning an off campus event, check with the venue to see if they have a preferred caterer or if you can use your preferred caterer.

Ambiance/Décor:

Once you have determined the location and layout of your event, you will want to consider the ambiance and décor. You can change the look and feel of a room using linens, lighting, flowers, music, etc. When doing this, consider the time of year, purpose and theme of the event.

- Linens
- Music
- Flowers
- Lighting
- Coat Rack/Check (do you need a coat rack for people to hang their own coats, or do you need to hire someone to check coats)

Signage:

You will need to consider if you need directional signage for parking, walking to the venue, or within the facility. In addition, will you need signs for registration or breakout rooms?

The Office of University Events will have 150th Anniversary podium and retractable banners available on a first-come, first-served basis. To make a loan request, please contact Noreen Pruyn at pruynn@stjohns.edu.

IT Classroom Support - Audio/Visual Equipment:

If on campus, click here to fill out the Technology Services Audiovisual Request Form for IT Classroom Support to setup A/V equipment (https://sjuit.formstack.com/forms/special_events_request_form). Please note, additional charges may apply.

When requesting A/V, consider if you will need to have a support person on-site to assist or if you and your speakers are comfortable handling the A/V needs yourselves. Will your speakers want to have someone advance slides for them, or will they want to advance the slides themselves using a remote?

Livestream – To arrange for your event to be livestreamed, reach out to IT Classroom Support. To have your video available online after the event, contact your Marketing and Communications Account Director.

IT Classroom Support Main Office
(Open Monday- Friday 7am-9pm)
(718) 990-5845

Marketing and Communications:

Photography/Videography/Writer - Will you need a photographer/videographer/writer at the event? Make a list of the photos required, such as speakers, VIPs, and setup shots. If photographing individuals, you may want to assign an additional person to the photographer. If using a videographer or photographer, what will the video/photos be used for? Will you send the link of photos or video to guests? Will they be used on a public website or will they be for archival purposes only? If using these services, you will want to put a sign in a public space (the registration desk is a great place for it) stating that people will be photographed and the photos may be used in public forums.

Complete the Photographer/Videographer/Writer Resource Request Form (<https://www.stjohns.edu/files/2019-resource-request-form>) and submit to your Marketing and Communications Account Director.

Release Forms - Always remember to obtain a photo release (<https://www.stjohns.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/adm-mkt-photorelease.pdf>) or photo release for minors (<https://www.stjohns.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/adm-mkt-photoreleaseminor.pdf>).

Social Media - Complete the Social Media Request Form (<https://www.stjohns.edu/about/news/social-st-johns/social-media-request-form>) to have your event shared on official St. John's University social media

Print Project Request - Complete the Print Project Request Form (https://www.stjohns.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/adm-mkt-projectrequestform.final1_.pdf) and submit to your Marketing and Communications Account Director. Discuss with your Account Director about the timeline for Print Projects. Requests could include Save the Date Card, Printed Invite Packet, E-Communications (Initial, Reminder, Thank You), etc.

Media Relations:

Whether planning an event, launching a new program or just looking to get some well-deserved attention for an achievement, the Office of Media Relations can maximize your visibility and make sure you get the news media placement you desire. Media campaigns can include:

- News release creation and distribution
- News media placement of professors as experts in their fields
- Media training
- Targeted outreach to specific media outlets
- Photography services (where applicable)

The Office of Media Relations is located on the Queens campus in the University Center. The Director of Media Relations has office hours at the Queens campus Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. The director also handles media inquiries for all regular branch campus locations in Manhattan, Staten Island and Long Island. Refer to the Media Protocols (<https://www.stjohns.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/11Mar%2719%20Media%20Relations%20Protocols.pdf>)

Public Safety:

Public Safety should be informed about your event. Details to include are event name, date, time, location, expected number of attendees, and list any VIPs. Also include special requests for security, transportation, and parking.

Security - Depending on the size and type of event, you may need to have security on site. You can request per diem officers for your event. Please note, additional charges may apply.

Transportation - If you have guests with special needs, you can requesting Public Safety provide transportation around campus. Please note, additional charges may apply.

Parking - If you will be having off campus guests, work with Public Safety on where to direct guests for parking. All visitors are requested to obtain and display a valid permit. Visitor permits can be obtained either at the Information Booth at Gate 1 or at the Public Safety office. Visitor permits are valid from the date of issuance to the date of expiration indicated on the permit.

Email the memo about your event for all campuses (Queens, Staten Island, and Manhattan) to:

Denise Vencak
vencakd@stjohns.edu

Patrick Wing
wingp@stjohns.edu

Miguel Pino
pinom@stjohns.edu

Day of Event:

- Check room set-up
- Set up registration
- Test audio/visual equipment
- Assure volunteers are in place
- Check catering is set up, all of the items on the agreement are there
- Determine everyone (attendees, sponsors, vendors, etc.) has all materials needed for event

Other Notes:

- Check indoor and outdoor lighting to be sure that all fixtures are working
- If outdoors, check on times/dates of outdoor watering system and if electrical receptacles are working
- Check to be sure that HVAC will be on if on weekend or when campus is closed
- Check to be sure all doors are unlocked in facility and what time they may lock in the evening
- Check to be sure elevators and bathrooms are in working order and are clean
- Determine if you will need to have special accommodations for hearing or mobility impaired guests

Post-Event:

- Schedule debriefing meeting or an email survey for comments
- Process invoices for payment; include necessary backup such as catering agreements, etc.
- Complete budget
- Complete timeline with all final dates
- Send out a survey or thank you message to participants
- Compile event folder online and/or hard copy for office archives and University archives

Archiving Event Materials

We ask that copies of event materials be sent to the University Archives within the 30 days after the event.

Please send copies of event materials to the University Archives, St. Augustine Hall, Room B20. Contact archives@stjohns.edu or 718-990-1465 for more information.

Relevant items may include printed materials (up to 3 copies each) and/or digital copies of:

- Photographs, video, audio
- Programs, invitations, tickets
- Flyers, scripts, speeches, guest lists
- Newsletters, newspaper articles, and other publicity
- Medals, pins, giveaways, and other memorabilia
- Key planning documents, correspondence, schedules, etc.