

DUKE LAW EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

Please read this guide carefully before planning an activity on behalf of a Duke Law department or student group. If you have questions about the planning process, contact the Events Office (events@law.duke.edu, 613-8548).

SPECIAL EVENTS

A special event is defined as any meeting, lecture, seminar, conference, social event, etc. that is scheduled to take place in any of the Law School's classrooms, Loggias, Noble Plaza, Alumnae Courtyard, Beber Gardens, Burdman Lounge, or [Star Commons](#), and/or involves [outside speakers](#), outside guests, [catering service](#) or will have food served, audio visual needs, [housekeeping needs](#), or [parking needs](#).

Eight steps to a successful event:

1. Develop an idea and gather information
2. Select a date and location
3. Submit a [special event request form](#)
4. Plan a budget and secure funding
5. Determine special needs, complete the [event manager questionnaire](#), and arrange for catering
6. Publicize event
7. Finalize all details and execute plan
8. Follow up and wrap up any loose ends

1. DEVELOP AN IDEA AND GATHER INFORMATION

This is the first and most critical step when planning an event. Some things to consider during this part of the process:

- *What type of event do you want to do?*
- *What is the purpose of your event?*
- *Who is the intended audience?*
- *Who will present the program portion of the event (if applicable)?*
- *When and where will the event be held?*
- *If funding is required, what are the potential sources for funding?*

2. SELECT A DATE AND LOCATION

Selecting a date: It is important to avoid conflicts when scheduling events. Please consult the Law School master calendar and select several potential dates for your event. Check other calendars as well, since religious holidays may not always appear on the Law School calendar.

NOTE: *If yours is an event to which you plan to invite faculty members or expect faculty attendance, bear in mind that faculty members have scheduled workshops and meetings on most Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the semester from 12:15-1:30 p.m. These dates are included on the master calendar and will be updated regularly as events are added. In general, it is best to avoid Tuesdays and Fridays if faculty attendance is a priority for your event.*

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Selecting a location: Decide how many people you think will attend the event and what type of space would be most conducive to your planned activities. Visit the [classroom technology](#) page to see the capacity for all classrooms as well as images, detailed floor plans, and the audio-visual capabilities. Check [room availability](#) on the desired date and time of your event.

***NOTE:** All final room assignments for events will be confirmed at the discretion of the Events Office and will be based on availability, projected audience, and scope of event.*

***NOTE:** Requests for the Nasher Conference Room (Room 2014) MUST be booked directly through the Dean's Office by emailing Janse Haywood, assistant to the dean, at haywood@law.duke.edu. Those using the Nasher Conference Room must enter via the hallway entrance, NOT through the Dean's Suite, and the doors to the Dean's Suite should remain closed throughout the duration of use.*

3. SUBMIT A SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST FORM

Requests for special events may be submitted from the [Events Office website](#). Once a request has been received it will then be processed and confirmed, generally within one (1) business day. Event confirmation will be in the form of an email to the request submitter and will solidify date, time, and location. Once an event has been confirmed, the Events Office will make the space reservation and post the date and time of the event to the Law School master calendar.

4. PLAN A BUDGET AND SECURE FUNDING

Before arranging for travel, catering, printing, and other expenses, it is wise to write an event budget that includes all anticipated expenditures. Make two versions of the budget, one that is ideal and one that reflects the absolute minimum that can be spent. Present the ideal budget to the sponsoring departments, and if the sponsors determine it is too high, present the lower budget. Determining a range of prices for each expense in advance will help you to do the most with the funds you have and avoid miscommunication with sponsors.

MAIN BUDGET ITEMS TO INCLUDE:

Speaker Travel: While Duke does not customarily offer an honorarium to its guest speakers, it is common practice to reimburse the speaker for all travel related expenses associated with their trip to Duke including airfare, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.

Publicity (posters, flyers, brochures, programs, and printing and mailing invitations): Publicity prices can vary drastically; determine your needs while keeping cost in mind. Publicity printed in black and white is the most cost effective, but for larger events, publicity printed in color may be more appropriate.

Catering Costs (food, drink, bartenders, servers, additional labor, linens, paper products, and/or china rental): Food costs can be one of the most expensive parts of an event and it is often difficult to determine pricing. Of course, all of these depend on the vendor and the menu you chose, as well as service, rental, and disposable costs, but these are some general cost breakdowns to use in determining the budget:

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- Breakfast – (assorted pastries, juice, coffee) \$5.50-\$6.50/ person
- Lunch – (boxed/bagged) \$6-\$8/person
- Lunch – (buffet) \$13-\$18/person
- Receptions – (no alcohol, hot appetizers, etc.) - \$15-18/person
- Receptions – (wine and beer, hot appetizers, etc.) - \$ 18-25/person
- Reception – (desserts only) - \$10-12/person
- Dinner – (buffet) - \$20-35/person
- Dinner – (plated) - \$30-35/ person
- Student event mixer – (includes five types of appetizers and iced tea; feeds 150) - \$500

Parking Fees: All visitors who drive to the Law School and park require a parking pass. Passes are \$5 each. If an event requires a large amount of parking spaces, other costs may be incurred. *Please see the [visitor parking guidelines](#) for more detailed information.*

FUNDING SOURCES:

Duke Bar Association Funding: (*for student organizations*) Please see the [DBA website](#) for more details on how to request funding from the DBA. If you are a student group, please refer to the [general accounting information](#) for student groups.

Co-Sponsoring Events: Co-sponsoring with other groups is encouraged, because it increases the number of interested students, heightens awareness, and decreases the cost to each organization. You may wish to contact another group at the Law School, elsewhere at Duke, or even in the Triangle community. Groups that are part of national organizations, like the Black Law Students' Association and the Federalist Society, may also be able to obtain funding from a related national group.

Firm Sponsorship: Duke Law has created a new [Blueprint Benefactors](#) program for firm sponsorship. This program was created to manage annual law firm sponsorships and allow the Law School to pool resources and efforts and to recognize our sponsors in a more consistent and visible manner each year. The Blueprint Benefactors program will be managed by the Alumni & Development office. To seek firm sponsorship, you must contact Lisa Weir, development assistant, at blueprintbenefactors@law.duke.edu.

Office of Alumni and Development: The Office of Alumni and Development also administers a Distinguished Speaker Fund. If your group would like to invite a major speaker to the school, contact alumni office (mclean@law.duke.edu, 613-7214, Room 1001) at least six months in advance of the event. This fund is intended to be used primarily to defray travel costs rather than to fund honoraria.

5. DETERMINE SPECIAL NEEDS, COMPLETE EVENT MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE, AND ARRANGE FOR CATERING

The Event Manager Questionnaire is an online questionnaire designed to both gather data regarding special needs for your event and notify the supporting departments of those needs. Once your event request has been confirmed and you determine your event needs, complete the [event manger questionnaire](#) for your event. Once your questionnaire has been submitted, it will generate an email to the supporting departs notifying them of your needs. The supporting departments will then follow up with you to confirm that your request has been received and collect additional information as needed.

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Catering – Arrangements for catering must be made by the group or department planning the event. Please read the [catering guidelines](#) for more information regarding policies and approved vendors.

6. PUBLICIZE EVENT

It is important to publicize your event through several channels to ensure desired attendance. The following are effective publicity outlets:

Calendar and Duke Law Daily: The first and most important information you will need to complete in the event manager questionnaire is the calendar section. Here you will have the opportunity to provide a brief description of your event as well as URL. Once these have been completed, the description of your event will be added to the master calendar. Calendar items are automatically added to the Duke Law Daily and appear starting two days before the event. The Daily is sent every morning classes are in session to all Law School students, faculty, and staff.

Fliers/Posters: You may post fliers and posters on designated bulletin boards around the school. Please refer to the [publicity guidelines](#) for details and specifications.

Plasma Screens: Images of event posters may be submitted for rotation on the plasma screens throughout the school. Please refer to the [publicity guidelines](#) for details and specifications.

Email Lists (student organizations): As part of your publicity plan, you should send an invitation/notification of your event to your group's listserv. Most student organizations have a list, which is moderated by a student moderator. Instructions for list moderators are available at: <http://www.law.duke.edu/computing/groupwise/listmoderator>. *Do not send mass emails to all students, faculty, or staff.* The Duke Law Daily and audience-specific portal pages are designed to notify the Duke Law community of all events and announcements, and to avoid excessive mass emails.

Tabling: This option allows students and other groups to set up informational tables in high-traffic areas to let people know about an event, to sell tickets, etc. For the 2009 -2010 academic year, groups may table on the 3rd Floor Loggia outside the library near the water fountain ONLY. Space and tables are limited, please plan ahead and make requests at least one week in advance. Tables may be requested by emailing Nanika Rhodes at nrhodes@law.duke.edu.

Media Coverage: The communications office may assist in promoting your event to the media; you must contact the communications office one month prior to your event to discuss options. Contact Frances Presma, assistant director of communications, at presma@law.duke.edu.

e-news: The Law School sends out a monthly e-newsletter to all alumni publicizing Law School events. If you wish to let alumni know about your event through *e-news*, please provide information about your event to Tanya Wheeler-Berliner, manager of web communications, at wheeler-berliner@law.duke.edu. As this is only a monthly publication, please make sure to send your information far in advance in order to make sure it is published in the month prior to your event.

Additional invitations: If you are planning a major event and would like to invite alumni, contact Susan Mclean, director of alumni relations, at mclean@law.duke.edu.

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7. FINALIZE ALL DETAILS AND EXECUTE PLAN

The final step is critical and must not be skipped even though the finish line is in sight. Double check, triple check, and quadruple check! In the days before your event, continue to review your checklist and make sure all items have been completed, all details have been confirmed, and that everyone involved has a clear idea of what they are expected to do, where they are supposed to be, and what time they need to be there.

8. FOLLOW UP AND WRAP UP ANY LOOSE ENDS

After an event is over, it is still not complete until all the necessary follow-up has been completed and all loose ends have been tied up. Following an event make sure to:

- Clean up all event-related materials and return any borrowed items to appropriate sources
- Secure any receipts from speakers for reimbursable expenses
- Initiate the reimbursement process and request to be notified when the person is paid
- Secure invoices from all vendors and initiate the payment process; request notification when vendors have been paid
- Send thank you notes to speakers and/or special guests
- Document event process and make notes for areas for improvement, in order for the next group to benefit from your experience