Services to UT Knoxville: Chapter Event Planning Expectations

The Services to UT Knoxville document details the various types of programming we encourage our chapters to host. This document is dedicated to laying out the ideal planning process and expectations for each category.

Before going through the event programming, here are some helpful tips for chapter leaders for before, during and after all of your events:

**Beginning of the calendar year:**

1. Plan your calendar for the year, and email that intent to your chapter director. Remember that the awards criteria states you must hold four different types of events in a year (TV viewing parties count as one event).
   a. Lay out the general details for each event (season/month, location, event type) and assign who will be in charge of leading that event.

**Before events:**

1. Ask the question: Is this event benefitting the university and alumni/friends in my area?
2. Submit a Chapter Event Submission Form 6 weeks before your event. This form is on the chapter toolkit website.
3. Promote your event via your social media accounts, word of mouth and your own email lists. The alumni office’s emails to all alumni in your area typically only reach 21% of the population who has email addresses.
   a. Create an event on Facebook. (Optional) Spend $5+ on Facebook Ads to promote your event to local UT fans. Reach out to your chapter director if you need help with this!

**During events:**

1. Setup a welcome table with items like shakers, a welcome sign, a sign-in sheet, mints, etc. Be sure to have someone at the welcome table greeting every person that walks in the door! This is your chance to build a loyal audience, and making it welcoming is so important.
2. Take pictures of the overall setup and close-ups of guests. Post these to your social media accounts if you get a moment at the event or right after. This will show what people are missing if they didn’t come and promote your chapter events even more!

**After events:**

1. Email your chapter director with an event summary and the approximate number of attendees. This is important because it shows your hard work, how many people you have engaged in a year, and the relevance of the chapter program to university leadership!
**University Programming**

*University leadership, faculty or staff speaks at a chapter event.*

1. (Chapter) Research potential speaker topics that you think would be popular in your area and send your ideas to your chapter director.
   a. I.e. controversial/hot topics/popular industry relevant to your area. Research articles/UT website to see if there are any UT “experts” on the topic. Check out this [website](#), too!
   b. Pick out a time frame for when you’re thinking of hosting the event.
      i. Note: Plan for a flexible timeframe for this, especially if you want a faculty member. Faculty probably cannot travel when school is in session and we will need ample time to reach out to them about the opportunity. Ideally, 6 months.

2. (Alumni Office) Confirm that the speaker is interested and available. Reach out to chapter board about availability, time frame and event space needs.

3. (Chapter) Look into venues that have private event spaces and A/V capabilities. Send a few options with pricing to your chapter director.

4. (Chapter & Alumni Office) Choose the location after reviewing the details/pricing. Please send contracts to the Alumni Office.

5. (Alumni Office) Process contract and return signed contract to Chapter.

**Student Engagement**

*Admissions- or college-led events; i.e. recruitment events or student college trips.*

1. (Chapter) Email your chapter director and copy the admissions recruiter with a request to be involved in admissions-led events. *Please don’t forget to copy your chapter director AND Taylor Thomas so we are in the loop!*

2. (Chapter) If you heard about a college trip that is coming to your area and would like to partner with them on an alumni event, email your chapter director.

3. (Alumni Office) Reach out to college about trip details, schedule and availability for student/alumni event.

4. (Alumni Office) Decide to either piggyback off an event the college already planned or look into hosting a university programming event.

5. This type of student engagement will be a case-by-case basis for planning, but the most important thing is to include us on all communications.

**Chapter events with students**

1. (Chapter) Talk to your chapter director about your idea for the alumni/student event.

2. A few things to note:
   a. Alcohol should not be present at events with students and be mindful of the type of event space you use with students/families present.
   b. If you are planning to invite high school students, the invitation must be open to all high school students within your target group (i.e. students in Williamson County) so that you are within NCAA compliance. Admissions/Taylor Thomas can help with this.

3. (Chapter) After approval, organize the event as you would a general chapter event & update your chapter director on the progress.
Athletics

Coaches at chapter events (when the team is playing in your area (football coaches are not available for chapter events)). (Similar planning process to University Programming.)

1. (Chapter) Look up the team’s schedules at utsports.com to see if they will be in your area.
2. (Chapter) Email your chapter director with the sport, date, time, and area, and ask to setup a chapter event with the coach as the speaker
3. (Alumni Office) Work with athletics to confirm coach’s availability and venue preference. Confirm availability/location with chapter.
4. (Chapter) Organize the event as you would a general chapter event & update your chapter director on the progress.

Caravans & Big Orange Tailgate Tours

1. (Alumni Office) Reach out to chapter for guidance on location, planning and helping staff the event. We make all of the booking arrangements and coordinate with athletics.

General Chapter Events

Social/Networking, Community Service, & Special Interest/Diversity

Examples: happy hour meet ups, attending local community sports or theatre shows, partnering with a local non-profit for a VOLunteer day, wine or beer tasting with food pairing, attending a restaurant opening, and so on.

1. (Chapter) Plan these strategically throughout the year. We recommend getting the board together in January and deciding on what type of events you want to host this year and when. Go ahead and plan the entire year in January!
2. (Chapter) Determine the type of event, date, location, time, and details. Copy your chapter director on these emails. We are here for mainly guidance and regulations with these types of events, but we let you have the reigns and want you to have fun!
3. (Chapter) Create an Eventbrite, Google doc, or Facebook event to take registrations for your event. You could also ask people to RSVP to one of the board members (this method is not preferred if you are taking registration money).

Philanthropic events can include:

1. Partnering with a non-profit in your area to volunteer your time. Follow the General Chapter Events guide for planning these events.
   a. Please note as a chapter, you cannot raise funds for or donate to the charity.
2. UT philanthropic events. These are events where you are raising money for UT, such as your chapter scholarship.
   a. (Chapter) Discuss with your chapter director your idea for a philanthropic event
      i. Event that is specifically for raising funds for your chapter scholarship (i.e. special event) OR
      ii. A general chapter event with a gift component added to the registration fee
b. (Chapter) Discuss with your chapter director if you should take registrations through the options mentioned in #3 of General Chapter Events or through the Alumni Office.
   i. Note: If you choose to use us, we will need to be more involved in the planning since we will pay for the event because it takes 45-60 days to cut a check back to the chapter and usually vendors require payment before/right after the event. If you have enough in your operating account to pay upfront and we reimburse you, then that could work. For most events, it is best practice to use Eventbrite.

c. (Chapter) Follow the guidelines for General Chapter Events

d. (Chapter) When advertising the event, be clear on how much is a donation, where they are donating to, why their gift matters, and if it’s refundable.

e. (Chapter) Send a check of the total amount raised with the fund’s name.