

Tips for Program Planning:

How to go from the big idea to the big event: A program can be anything that would be enjoyable for the members of your organization and for the greater community, keeping in mind university policies and U.S. laws. For example: a party, a dance, a concert, a hike, animated films, a dinner on the Quad, or any other idea that creative and energetic students have about what to do for their organization and campus community. You are most often the best person to plan activities for your fellow students because you are one of them. You may be looking for a framework of references to help you bring one or two of those ideas into reality. Below are some things you will need to think about in order to bring those ideas, big or small, to life.

Brainstorming: Have fun with brainstorming, it allows for all members to speak their minds and enjoy the process of throwing out crazy ideas; sometimes the craziest ideas can create the most enjoyable programs. Brainstorming is a chance to set your mind free and offers a chance to see how your fellow team members think. It is as simple as getting the team together, opening the floor, jotting down and accepting every idea. There are no wrong ideas. As a leader, we encourage you to foster a trusting climate where people are not afraid to let their imaginations run a little wild. Remember: nothing, as improbable as it seems, is impossible.

Know your Audience: By knowing your audience, you can gauge what type of program would be most beneficial. Here are a few questions to think about it in understanding your audience:

- I. What age group would I like to attract?
- II. What are their likes and dislikes?
- III. What does my intended audience do in their free time?
- IV. What other events are already being offered to this group?
- V. What do you hope your audience will get from the program?

How do you find out what an audience wants to be involved in?

There are always great ways to spice up old ideas with new looks. Look around and see what other programs have been successful in the past. The following is a list of places that can yield great programming ideas:

- Informal conversations: both within your organizational meetings and between members of your organization and the greater community.
- Other programs: whether it is taking an old program, or an idea from another school, or even collaborating with another student organization on one of their programs.
- Other college calendars and websites: look up what other schools have done and put a twist of your own on it.
- Books of contemporary games and activities: the library, Student Activities, Outdoor Education, and Underdog can be helpful in creating/designing ice breakers and other games and activities.
- You will probably learn what your target audience is interested in after answering the questions and looking at other programs. After finding a target audience, and even potentially a program, the next step is to plan.