

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
FACILITIES USE GUIDELINES**

SUBJECT: Framework for Planning a Public Lecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

FROM: Facilities Use Committee

DATE: July 15, 1999

The primary purpose of the University Wisconsin-Madison is to provide a learning environment in which faculty, staff, and students can discover, examine critically, preserve and transmit the knowledge, wisdom, and values that will help ensure the survival of this and future generations and improve the quality of life for all. At the UW-Madison, learning takes place in many different environments, including classroom learning and out-of-classroom activities. Since the founding of the UW-Madison in 1848 the campus has sponsored thousands of public lectures, which have provided the campus and surrounding communities a forum to vigorously exchange ideas. If planned correctly, public lectures offer the campus and the Madison community a forum to address critical societal issues, which compliment the learning that takes place within the traditional classroom. To successfully organize a public lecture requires considerable planning and assistance from many different campus units. Public lectures can also, at times, be controversial, with speakers discussing an electrifying array of academic, political, social, and economic issues. To help students, staff and faculty successfully plan and deliver a public lecture on campus we offer this “framework for planning a public lecture.”

University departments, student organizations and other affiliated groups enrich the community by their sponsorship of these events. Lecture programs that are planned well and structured carefully will have the greatest likelihood of providing an effective platform for the speaker to communicate his or her ideas and for the audience to listen to, critically analyze, and question speakers. The principles implicit in the following “public lecture planning framework” can be found in the now-famous sifting and winnowing statement of 1894:

“Whatever may be the limitations which trammel inquiry elsewhere, we believe that the great State University of Wisconsin should ever encourage that continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.”

Framework for Planning a Public Lecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

➤ Identifying and contacting a speaker

Prominent political, cultural, and entertainment personalities who appear regularly on the lecture circuit (e.g., colleges, universities, service organizations, civic clubs, etc.) can be located through directories, catalogues of agencies, lecture bureaus and the UW-Madison Office of News and Public Affairs. The Internet is also an excellent source of information. Personal contacts can be helpful, but rarely result in reduced fees.

➤ Arranging for an engagement: contractual obligations and fees

Contracts for artists or their agencies must be entered into by authorized representatives of eligible on-campus program sponsors only—colleges, departments, registered student organizations, etc.—not by individuals. Fees and other compensation in excess of \$3,200 are subject to Wisconsin Department of Revenue six percent non-resident withholding tax. The sponsoring group should inform the artist or speaker in advance about any anticipated withholding taxes that will affect the contract.

➤ Reserving university space

Reserving space on campus for non-instructional use is done through the campus Central Reservations Office, which is located on the second floor of the Memorial Union (262-2511). Do not enter into any agreements with speakers until you have secured a suitable program venue.

➤ Transportation to Madison, accommodations and meals

These things are often specific as contractual requirements, and must be given a dollar value, as they are considered part of the total compensation for purposes of the State's withholding tax.

➤ Transportation within Madison

Sponsors should be prepared to provide all local transportation for the speakers and their guests (e.g., airport, hotel, speaking venues, etc.)

➤ Sponsoring group contracts and spokespeople

Campus sponsors/hosts should provide the artist or his/her representative with one primary, and no more than two representatives through whom to communicate on all matters related to a visit. Include work, home and emergency phone numbers.

➤ Event schedule from speaker's arrival to departure

A complete and detailed schedule of the guest's itinerary, including times, places, phone numbers and names of key people should be prepared and distributed to all people who need to know (e.g., who will meet, who will escort, who will introduce, etc.)

➤ Security

Programs warranting special security arrangements should be noted as such when being scheduled with the Central Reservations Office. Notifications should go to the University Police Department, Office of News and Public Affairs, Transportation

Services, the Dean of Students Office, the venue operator, and any other appropriate offices. The University Police will determine the necessary and required security arrangements in conjunction with the sponsor and the venue operator. The cost of security is the responsibility of the event sponsors.

➤ **Program activities other than the primary presentation**

Sponsors may wish to limit information to the general public about visitor's itinerary of restricted or invitation-only events, such as classroom seminars, invited-guests-only dinners, etc.

➤ **Post-event reception, book signing, etc.**

Time, location and crowd control arrangements for these types of activities should be carefully discussed and coordinated in advance with both the guest and the venues where they will occur. Information about these activities should be clearly communicated in advance to the public and all interested parties.

➤ **Press/media and press conferences**

Arrangements for pre-event press conferences, usually in a location other than that of the primary public presentation, should be made in advance. All communication to the media and other information outlets (e.g., the lecture venue, the sponsoring group's departmental office, etc.) should clearly identify where inquiries can be addressed.

➤ **Primary event planning**

Preliminary discussions at least six weeks in advance of an event should occur between the sponsor and all interested parties (e.g., the hall or venue manager, UW Police Department, Office of News and Public Affairs, etc.). Topics covered should include content, timing and outlets for public notices and announcements; admissions arrangements; ticket distribution procedures; guest arrival and department procedures; security needs and requirements; stage set-up; audio-visual needs; backstage access; admissions lists; VIP tickets; seating locations, etc.

➤ **Target audience: campus, or campus and general public**

Choices about the intended audience for a speaker will obviously affect many of the choices made during event planning. Program sponsors should project larger than expected public participation, and should be sensitive to the interests of non-primary or non-target audiences in their speaker.

➤ **Access and admission: tickets sold or distributed without charge, or open admission (no tickets)**

Crowd control is a primary concern of the venue operator, and event sponsors should make no announcements about tickets or access without prior discussion with all interested parties. When ticket or admission information is published, it should be accurate, consistent and shared with all concerned parties (e.g., box office, sponsoring department, etc.) prior to any public notice or media announcement.

➤ **Technical arrangements: stage set-up, microphone placement, seat layout and allocation**

After preliminary planning, these matters should be verified with the venue at least one week before the event, and re-confirmed on the day of the program. Any changes or last minute adjustments should be communicated to the primary staff at the venue as soon as possible.

➤ **Staffing**

Staffing levels should follow the recommendations set forth by the venue operator to maximize the safety and security of the public and the speaker.

➤ **Program format options**

The following questions should be considered: is there a host and/or moderator; who is best suited to introduce the speaker; is there a question and answer procedure; who will end the program and with what format? These matters should all be agreed upon with the guest speaker, and arranged in detail and in advance with the venue.

A key concern is whether and how the question and answer session is designed and conducted. It is University of Wisconsin-Madison tradition and common practice at public speaking events to include an opportunity for the audience to ask questions of the speaker. The sponsors of an event need to plan carefully for the format to be used in any Q&A session. These are several alternatives:

- At random from the floor; questioner identified/selected by the speaker (variation: same format—host or moderator selects questioner.)
 - Pitfalls: questions not audible; speaker cannot hear or understand; has to repeat for audience; questioners or sections of audience (especially balcony) overlooked.
- Runners collect questions from the audience, convey to stage (moderator sorts, selects and reads).
 - Pitfalls: audience/questioners have no paper or writing implements; questions when received on-stage are not legible; impression is conveyed that moderator is editing or selecting questions.
- Microphones in the venue, and audience lines up and asks own questions: clearly the best method for a large venue.
 - Pitfalls: expense of additional microphones and board operator to control equipment. Moderator or speaker must manage process (i.e., maintain rotation from mic-to-mic and cut off “ramblers”). Also, cut-off or closure when people are waiting or keep lining up needs to be decisive.

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