MEMORANDUM

To: Event Managers

From: Breny DaParre Garcia, Office of the President

Date: June 17, 2015

Re: University’s Signature and Special Events - Roles and Expectations

As discussed at many of our gatherings, the president has expressed his desire to always offer our constituents a Worlds Ahead experience when they attend university events. Many of you have asked for a better outline of his expectations for institutional events.

The first part of this document intends to delineate roles and expectations between the president’s office, colleges/schools, Donor Relations (DR) under University Advancement, and Community Relations, Protocol and Special Events (CRPSE) under External Relations as it relates to operations, management and staffing of university-wide and large-scale recurring events (i.e., FIU’s “signature” events).

Ceremonies & Awards
- These are defined as large-scale, university-wide events honoring a specific constituency. Ceremonies include Faculty Convocation, Commencement, Freshmen Convocation and White Coat Ceremony. Awards include HR Employee Service & Recognition Awards.
- All ceremonies are to be managed by CRPSE. Because of the nature of these events, each ceremony will, of course, require partnership with other areas (i.e., Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Alumni Relations and/or colleges and schools).
- All awards are the responsibility of the respective unit, but overseen by CRPSE (to ensure production and service quality).
- Should a university donor be honored and/or asked to speak at one of these ceremonies or awards, DR will be consulted in order to have the donor’s vision and special request incorporated into the plans.
- Specifically for ceremonies, logistics for these donors will be handled by CRPSE (as they do for any other VIP ceremony), unless otherwise requested by the donor or President.
Annual Gala Fundraisers

- This is defined as an annual / cyclical event aimed at fundraising for a specific division or college. These galas include Path Awards Luncheon, Sapphire Celebration, Hall of Fame, Torch Awards and Diamond Dinner.
- All galas fundraisers are the responsibility of the respective division/college, but overseen by DR (to ensure production and service quality).
- CRPSE will assist, as requested, for video production and publications services.

Lectures

- This is defined as a university-wide event aimed at educating the audience on a specific topic. These lectures include events like GeoPolitical, TEDxFIU and Teach-Ins.
- All lectures are to be managed by CRPSE. Because of the nature of these events, each lecture will, of course, require partnership with other areas (i.e. Academic Affairs, Engagement, Research, UTS, and/or Alumni Relations).
- Should a university donor be honored and/or asked to speak at one of these ceremonies, DR will be consulted. Their involvement will vary depending on the needs of the event.

There are also several “special events” (i.e., non-recurring) that occur throughout the year. Though not a signature event, they are considered an institutional event and should therefore follow similar protocols.

Gala Celebrations

- This is defined as a special event aimed at celebrating a major milestone of a specific division or college. These galas include events like the College of Law’s 10th Anniversary, College of Nursing & Health Sciences’ Nightingala (30th Anniversary Celebration), College of Engineering and Computing’s 30th Anniversary and FIU@50.
- All galas are the responsibility of the respective division/college, but overseen by CRPSE (to ensure production and service quality).
- Should a university donor be honored and/or asked to speak at one of these ceremonies, DR will be consulted. Their involvement will vary depending on the needs of the event.
Groundbreakings / Ribbon-Cuttings / Unveilings
- Each time the university breaks ground, opens and/or unveils a new space on campus, CRPSE is responsible for all event logistics.
- Should a university donor be part of the event (i.e., building naming, plaque unveiling, financial contributions, etc.), DR will be consulted in order to have the donor’s vision and special request incorporated into the plans.
- Any special requests (e.g., tours, lunches, etc.) in addition to the official university event will be managed by the respective division or college. Should the college need assistance, they should coordinate the special requests with DR.

Retirements / Celebrations of Life
- All retirements and celebrations of life are the responsibility of the respective division or college.
- There will be some instances, though, when the employee’s service to the university deserves a university-wide event. In those cases, CRPSE is responsible for all event logistics.
- Depending on the person being honored, consultation with the President, Provost and/or other Vice Presidents (or the honoree’s office) may be required.

Stewardship / Recognition Events
- This is defined as breakfast, lunch, dinner, reception or discussion where a donor will be recognized for their recent gift and/or thanked for their continued giving.
- All events of this nature are the responsibility of the respective division or college. In the event the President is involved, DR will serve as the main event manager (to ensure production and service quality).
- Should this event occur at the Reagan House, DR will work with the Office of the President to ensure all appropriate protocols are followed and briefing materials are provided.

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In addition to defining the types of events and the respective roles, many of you have also asked about standard protocols for university’s signature and special events. The second part of this document details expectations that must be met. Please note that any associated costs will be the responsibility of the requesting unit.

Publications

- External Relations has publication services (e.g., invitation, programs, etc.) and are used to producing high-quality items.
- You may choose an external vendor, but the following items must be included during production –
  o Correct university branding
  o High quality images
  o High quality paper
  o Consistent and correct use of titles
- Any invitation that lists me must be approved by my office prior to dissemination. Programs and other printed materials should be approved by CRPSE or DR (depending who is assigned as the lead).

Video Production

- External Relations has video production capabilities and may be hired for your production needs.
- If a video is to be shown at the event, the following key points should be addressed:
  o High quality images
  o High quality sound
  o Names and titles of any speakers are included
  o Consistent branding
- All videos should be pre-approved by the Dean and/or Vice President as well as the President. (Allow enough time for potential edits prior to the event.)
- If round tables are used, there must be video screens on all sides of the room.
- Any external videos / powerpoints must be submitted to the event lead for approval and sent to production team for testing prior to the event.

Lighting

- There should always be a light on or over the podium.
- It is preferred that when VIP guests are recognized from stage that a spotlight shine at their table.
- The setup and lighting levels that are approved during rehearsal is what should remain for the actual event. (This is especially true for the stage and podium.)
- If there is a stage, proper lighting should be set backstage for the safety of speakers and honorees who must enter via backstage.
- If the FIU logo is to be projected to a backdrop, ensure it is a smooth material (e.g., wall, canvas, etc.). Logo projections to draped fabric (even if white) do not come out well.
Sound
- Audio should be set up according to the size of the space and number of guests (i.e., the larger the space, the more speakers required).
- The setup and audio levels that are approved during rehearsal is what should remain for the actual event.

Staging
- The podium used at the event must be one of the two used by the president (wood or clear podiums with FIU logo).
- There should always be water available at the podium for each speaker. If the podium is the clear one, have water available off-stage for anyone who may need it.
- If videos will be shown …
  - and the screens around the room are not easily visible to the speaker, make sure to have a confidence monitor available near the podium so that the speaker can stay on queue.
  - and there are honorees waiting backstage, make sure to have video screens or confidence monitors available backstage.
- For the safety of speakers and honorees, all stages must have railings in the back of stage and on any steps. If railings are not available in the back of stage, then plants or a backdrop should be placed there.
- Staging cards must be placed on stage floor so that speakers/honorees know where to stand for presentations and photo ops.
- The following stage assistants are required:
  - Overall manager directing all assistants
  - Someone at each staircase to help speakers/honorees walk up and down the steps
  - If there are awards presented, someone on stage passing the award to appropriate person
  - If there are honorees, an escort for each one
- All stage assistants MUST be present at any rehearsals, especially those who may be handling award presentations.

Photography
- If awards and presentations occur at the event, photographer should be briefed prior to the event about the expectations of the photo ops.
- If there is a rehearsal, photographer should be present.
Scripting

- A VIP recognition list should be pre-determined based on RSVPs (and placed in order of precedence).
  - At the event, actual attendance of those VIPs are confirmed and then handed to the speaker prior to the event starting.
  - This VIP list should be read by the MC. If there is no MC, then it should be read by the Dean or VP. In rare occasions, the president can also do the recognitions.
- I prefer to speak only once at podium.
- When there are multiple speakers at podium, everyone shall either (a) bring their individual scripts to the podium and take with them once done, or (b) read from a master script binder that is left on podium
  - If there are photo ops involved on stage, it is usually best to have a master binder at podium (otherwise, the speakers will have their scripts in the photo).
- If using a master script, the president’s pages must be tabbed so that he may easily locate it.
- If possible, we do recommend a computer and printer be setup at the event site in case scripting edits are required.

Remarks

- The president’s speech should always be aligned to the theme of the event.
- External Relations does offer services to write the president’s speeches, but they must be submitted 1 month in advance.
  - Notice of the president’s roles should also be included in the request (i.e., key points to hit, if he is supposed to introduce someone, cue a video, recognize guests, etc.).
  - The request should be made in coordination with the Office of the President.

Seating

- Table numbers should be visible for guest arrival.
- All tables should be placed in numerical order.
- In the event table numbers are not used (i.e., if they have sponsor names instead), there should be several staff members or assistants throughout the room assisting guests to their seats.
- The president’s table must have place cards.
  - If the president is involved in most of the event’s program, he may be seated with his back to stage.
  - However, if there is an honoree at his table, they should always be seated to the president’s right and facing stage.
Staffing

- The respective division or college should assign one person to staff the president (e.g., AVP, DO, Director, etc.).
- This person should be knowledgeable about event logistics and available throughout the event to help the president as needed (i.e., introduce him to guests, answer questions about the program, discuss guest list, etc.).
- If several politicians are invited, a representative of Governmental Relations should be added to the staffing list (specifically for registration).
- Security/Police should always be hired for all signature events, and on occasion special events (depending on number of attendees and the location).
- For long events (over 3 hours), working staff should all receive pre-planned breaks. If the event is during breakfast, lunch, or dinner, working staff (including vendors like police) should be offered a meal either prior to or after the event.

VIP Hospitality

- All VIPs should be greeted upon arrival and escorted to their seats and/or staging area.
- If a VIP has a room pre-event, key amenities should be provided (e.g., water, snacks, copy of program, etc.).
- Security/Police must escort all honorees to their vehicle at the end of the evening (even if there is valet). If security is not offered by the venue, services must still be reserved via FIU Police or one of their recommended companies.

Pre/Post Meetings

- All signature events should have a briefing meeting (within 2-4 weeks prior to event) and a debriefing meeting (within 1 month of the event) with the respective division or college as well as me.
- These meetings should be scheduled at the same time that the event is added to the president’s schedule.
- Site walkthroughs (prior to event) should be scheduled with all event leads and any partner units.
- Rehearsals (day of) are required with all speakers and stage assistants. Normally, the president will also participate.