

2024-25 ETSU

# Event Protocols

MARY LIB QUARLES WHITE

PANHELLENIC SUITE



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

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# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Hundreds of events take place on the East Tennessee State University campus every year. These engagements include Homecoming events, receptions, dinners, building dedications, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, and more. They also encompass hallowed academic occasions such as Commencement, convocations, and special distinguished lectures.

Cumulatively, these university events contribute to an individual's overall "ETSU Experience" and shape our institutional brand. We want that experience to be positive and a true reflection of the mission and values of ETSU. As the number of events we host continues to rise, it is important that protocols and processes are in place to guide ETSU faculty and staff in event planning, from the initial conceptualization all the way through execution and evaluation in order to provide consistency in the university experience across campus.

The goal of this document is to ensure that ETSU special events yield the best university experience for those who attend, as well as those involved in the countless hours of planning efforts. Information is available on standard operating procedures, event protocols, and resources available, all designed to be a master guide in creating consistent, outstanding ETSU events. This is a living document and we plan to update it annually to reflect the university as it grows and changes over the years.

Thank you for your role in shaping the ETSU Experience. Should you have any questions or suggestions on best practices for events, please contact the Office of University Events at [events@etsu.edu](mailto:events@etsu.edu).

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Nuss Clements". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a light-colored background.

Jennifer Nuss Clements  
Executive Director for the Martin Center & University Events

# WHY EVENTS MATTER

Events are the way that most people interact with the university. They are the outward face of ETSU to faculty, staff, students, and the community at large. The goal of this manual is to help create clarity and consistency for events throughout the university.

- ▶ Create a standard for ETSU events, regardless of size.
- ▶ Provide consistently positive guest experiences.
- ▶ Provide a clear and consistent ETSU look and feel across the university.
- ▶ Offer clear and consistent event planning processes to support staff.

This is important because events are a form of communication. With every event, we want to clearly communicate the following core messages:

- ▶ **ETSU is a place where people come first and are treated with dignity and respect.**

This is communicated when we provide thoughtful hospitality for our guests. For example: Ensuring guests are welcomed, details are communicated in advance, accessible locations/seating are provided, and guests are asked about dietary or mobility considerations.

- ▶ **ETSU provides real-world impact – improving the quality of life for people in the region – and beyond.**

This is communicated in the content of the program as well as through the identity of the hosts, speakers, and guests. For example: When we include student or community speakers on the agenda, we provide an opportunity for them to speak about how their lives have been impacted by the university.

## RAISING VISIBILITY

For far too long, our university has been among the nation's "best-kept secrets." This is a disservice not only to our students, faculty, staff, and alumni, but also to our entire region. Events are key to raising the visibility of the university by inviting the larger community to be a part of what we are doing.



# QUALITY MATTERS

The impressions we make during an event impact how people see ETSU as a whole.

## **SAFETY**

Our first duty is to keep our guests' safety in mind. This includes, but is not limited to, taping down loose wires to the floor; having Public Safety presence, if needed; knowing the appropriate seating capacity; knowing who to call in case of an emergency; and if serving food, identifying food allergies.

## **CLEANLINESS**

Not only should the event space and outside surrounding areas be clear of dirt/mess, but also consider details (e.g., garbage cans are not overflowing, glass walls and windows are smudge-free, etc.).

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

Check spelling (including names of campus buildings and guests). Practice speeches. Make checklists. Brief your event staff. Wear your name tag and appropriate attire. The quality of the event influences guests' impression of the quality of the institution. Details go a long way!

## **COMMUNITY AND BELONGING**

ETSU is an inclusive community that respects, honors, and works toward amplifying the voices of all people. Inclusiveness and facilitating a sense of belonging contribute to a happier, more productive environment for the university. At our events we want to communicate to guests that everyone is welcome at ETSU. One way to promote community and belonging is through hospitality at events.

# WHERE TO START: ENVISION THE EVENT

Every event has a purpose and goal, whether that be increasing student or alumni participation, cultivating relationships with potential donors or partners, or raising the visibility of a program and/or the university as a whole. The type of event you are holding will determine everything moving forward, so it is best to have a clearly defined vision at the start of the event-planning process. When planning an event, please consider:

- ▶ Who is this for?
- ▶ What stakeholders need to be included?
- ▶ With whom should we collaborate?
- ▶ Why are we doing this? What are we trying to achieve?
- ▶ What are we trying to communicate?
- ▶ How will we measure the success of our event?

## EVENT TIMING

Once you determine who the event is for, you can focus on how to cater to that group's needs. What is the best time for the individuals you are trying to target? What date works best for them?

When setting the day/time for your event, remember to consider the following: holidays, annual community events, special guests' schedules, work schedules, other campus events, and traffic. Plan your day-of event schedule to ensure that everything can be accomplished as necessary. Look at the group you are targeting for the event, and check for potential conflicts they may have. Specific things to consider:

- ▶ Do I have time to plan this event?
- ▶ Check on availability of key participants.
- ▶ Check on availability of spaces for the event.
- ▶ Check the Interdepartmental Calendar to ensure no conflicts.
- ▶ Add the event to the calendar, even if all details are not yet confirmed. (Please remember to update when details are confirmed.)
- ▶ Determine what date works best after checking the above.



## EVENT LOCATION

The type of event you are holding determines what space would be best suited for your event. For example, if you are hosting a special guest lecture with theater-style seating, it would be easiest to hold your event in an auditorium or theater. Below are some things to consider when selecting a space:

- ▶ What kind of guest seating is needed?
  - Theater-style presentation with stage?
  - Round-table discussion?
  - Seated meal or buffet?
  - Mix and mingle?
- ▶ What equipment or tables are needed? Stage? Podium? Are they included in the space? Are you planning to have a performance group or band? What needs does this group have that should be consider when choosing a location?

Work with the space manager to create a floor plan that will allow guests to comfortably move through the space and participate in all aspects of the event (e.g., if you want guests to mingle, there has to be room for them to mingle). See sample floor plan diagrams on pages 39-41.



## BUDGET

Requesting units are responsible for all expenses related to the event. Consider the following costs when planning:

- ▶ Space rental
- ▶ Reserved parking
- ▶ Catering and related rentals, such as tents, tables, chairs, and linens.
- ▶ Décor, such as centerpieces, podium arrangements, and balloon towers.
- ▶ A/V vendors to assist with staging, lighting, video production, and other technical aspects.
- ▶ Design and printing costs related to programs, invitations, and signage (directional, greeting, etc.)
- ▶ Cleaning of surrounding areas
- ▶ Safety: security vendor, EMS on standby, and police presence.

## EVENT LOGISTICS

### EVENT TIMELINE/CHECKLIST

It is important to create a comprehensive outline of your event. Include all items that need to be executed, completion date for each item, and person assigned to that item. Asana.com is a great resource for creating task lists and collaborating with your team. An Excel template of a timeline/task list is also available at [etsu.edu/events](https://etsu.edu/events).

- ▶ A helpful way to create your timeline is to set hard dates and work backward.
- ▶ Assign tasks and set deadlines.
- ▶ Clearly define roles/responsibilities.
- ▶ Include regular opportunities to check in.

Task	Deadline	Leader
<b>Printed Invite</b>		
Invite content confirmed	8 weeks in advance	Enter Name
Guest list confirmed	7 weeks in advance	
Invite first proof ready	7 weeks in advance	
Invite edits due		Who confirms all edits are submitted?
Mailing list submitted to Post Office	6 weeks in advance	
Invite final file to printer	6 weeks in advance	
Invite printed and mailed	5 weeks in advance	
RSVP Deadline		Who manages RSVPs?
<b>Program</b>		
Program content confirmed	5 weeks in advance	
Program first proof ready	4 weeks in advance	
Program edits due	3 weeks in advance	
Program final file to printer	2 weeks in advance	
Program delivered	1 week in advance	



## RESERVE A SPACE

### WHEN TO BOOK A SPACE:

Reserve space(s) for your activity as early as possible. Many venues accept reservations for campus-affiliated events 12-18 months in advance. The most heavily scheduled months are September, October, March, and April. It is not uncommon to have all available dates for the Culp Ballroom and Auditorium booked several months before each of these periods.

### HOW TO BOOK A SPACE:

A number of different ETSU campus venues are available for events, and each has a different booking process and event contact. Below is a list of commonly used spaces with a link to more information.

- ▶ The D.P. Culp Student Center  
[etsu.edu/students/student-center/reserve-space-on-campus.php](https://etsu.edu/students/student-center/reserve-space-on-campus.php)
- ▶ The Martin Center  
[etsu.edu/martin-center/venue-rental/default.php](https://etsu.edu/martin-center/venue-rental/default.php)
- ▶ The James and Nellie Brinkley Center (formerly known as the Millennium Center)  
Contact the Space Management Coordinator  
[etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/contactus.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/contactus.php)
- ▶ The Reece Museum  
[etsu.edu/cas/cass/reece/venue.php](https://etsu.edu/cas/cass/reece/venue.php)
- ▶ The Sherrod Library - Quillen Conference Room  
<https://libraries.etsu.edu/spaces/quillen>
- ▶ The ETSU Innovation Lab  
[etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/venues/innovation-lab.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/venues/innovation-lab.php)
- ▶ The ETSU/Eastman Valleybrook Campus  
[etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/venues/valley-brook.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/venues/valley-brook.php)
- ▶ Athletics spaces, such as the Ballad Health Athletic Center (Mini-Dome), Brooks Gym, and Football Tower  
[etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/contactus.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/contactus.php)

## CONFIRM PARTICIPANTS

**Hosts:** Who is putting on the event determines who the host(s) should be. If the event is being put on by the:

- ▶ University as a whole – hosts should be the President, Provost, and/or appropriate Vice President.
- ▶ A college – hosts should be the Dean, an Associate Dean, or other appropriate official.
- ▶ A department or school – hosts should be the department head and faculty/staff.

**Speakers:** Who should speak at your event?

- ▶ The host
- ▶ Other key ETSU leaders related to the event
- ▶ Guest speaker or keynote speaker
- ▶ Student/representative for the groups involved
- ▶ Care should be taken not to have too many speakers. Try to select one of each of the above categories. Only select the 3-5 people most intimately connected to your event.
- ▶ To request the ETSU President to speak at your event, visit [etsu.edu/president/request\\_forms/](https://etsu.edu/president/request_forms/)

**Special guests:** Who should be recognized/honored/thanked?

- ▶ **Guests:** As you think about your target audience for your event, be sure to invite everyone who needs to be included (e.g., if it is an event involving donors, ensure that [Advancement staff](#) are included, or if it is a student event, ensure that the appropriate department staff are included). Below are some groups you should consider:
  - ETSU leadership
  - College leadership
  - ETSU students, faculty, and staff
  - Alumni
  - Retirees
  - Faculty Emeriti
  - Community partners and related groups
- ▶ **Media:** Reach out to your [University Marketing and Communications Partnership Manager](#) about whether it is appropriate to invite media to your event. They have a relationship with the local media outlets and can create/send news advisories and/or news releases as appropriate. (Example: Orthotics and Prosthetics ribbon cutting)
- ▶ **Elected officials:** When government officials are involved, reach out to the [Office of Community & Government Relations](#).
- ▶ **ETSU Board of Trustees, Foundation Board of Directors, or Alumni Board of Directors:** For these groups, invitations should be sent to the respective board liaisons rather than directly to board members.
  - For the ETSU Board of Trustees, contact the [ETSU Chief of Staff](#).
  - For the ETSU Foundation Board of Directors, contact the [Vice President of Advancement](#).
  - For the Alumni Board of Directors, contact the [Executive Director for the ETSU National Alumni Association](#).



## FOOD AND BEVERAGE

### CREATING A MENU

Consider the nature of the event when selecting food:

- If guests will be standing, provide bite-sized finger foods that do not require utensils to eat.
- If the event is outside, avoid foods that easily spoil, such as cold cuts, deviled eggs, fish, or items with a lot of mayonnaise.
- For formal events, avoid messy food that is hard to cut or is often eaten with your hands, such as burgers, tacos, barbecue, chicken wings, ribs, or corn on the cob.



Consider the season and weather:

- If the event is scheduled during a warm/hot time, serve lots of cold beverages and light foods featuring fresh fruits and vegetables.
- If the event is scheduled during a cold time, provide warm beverages and hot food. Heavier meals are appropriate.
- Ask your catering manager to feature seasonal fruits and vegetables. Below are some examples:
  - ♦ Spring: Asparagus, lamb, baby greens, strawberries
  - ♦ Summer: Watermelon, fresh mint, corn, tomatoes, grilled foods
  - ♦ Fall: Apples, acorn or butternut squash, yams, cinnamon, caramel
  - ♦ Winter: Root vegetables, potatoes, cream, chestnuts, walnuts, eggnog

### CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

- Are they adventurous eaters? Or do they prefer more traditional fare?
- Be aware of religious considerations:
  - ♦ Many people of Muslim faith avoid pork and alcohol.
  - ♦ Many people of Jewish faith avoid pork, shellfish, and foods that combine meat and dairy.

- ♦ Many people of Hindu faith avoid beef and pork. Vegetarianism is common.
- ♦ Some religious holidays require fasting or abstaining from certain foods. For example, it is traditional for Muslims to fast during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan, Jews to avoid leavened and fermented foods during Passover, and Catholics to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent.

### ORDERING

Food service of any type must be arranged through the contracted [University Food Service Vendor](#).



### PRESENTATION

The ETSU catering team will set up the food for your event and provide linens, cutlery, and guidance on layout. As an event manager, it is your job to ensure that the food is well-presented and request adjustments as needed. Some things to look for:

- ▶ Buffets should have the same order as a plated meal (i.e., plates, salad, entrée, sides, dessert).
- ▶ Buffets should have a variety of levels for visual interest with a contrasting linen placed over display stands.
- ▶ All food and beverages should be clearly labeled. The catering manager will provide labels for buffet service, but the event manager will need to provide printed menus for plated meals. See sample menu on page 43.

### TABLE SERVICE

Make sure that tables are bussed regularly, drinks are refilled, and plates are cleared in a timely manner. Candidly communicate with the catering manager about the timeline for the event so they know when to serve and clear.

### ALCOHOL

Review the [ETSU Campus Alcohol Policy](#).





## ROOM SETUP - THEATER-STYLE PRESENTATION

### STAGE SETUP

When setting the stage, consider how you would like photographs of the speaker, honorees, ribbon cutting, or presentation to look. If someone steps onstage to receive an award, ensure that there is a good background for a photo – the event name or approved logo should be visible, along with appropriate flags, nice décor, and/or a simple “clean” backdrop. Avoid having tables of awards or other people positioned behind the speaker or honoree as this will make it hard to produce a good photograph of the event.



### PODIUM PLACEMENT

Ensure that the podium is set up in such a way that photographers in the audience can get clear shots of speakers and/or the entire stage party. If there is décor on stage, ensure that it is set back so that it does not obstruct the view of the speakers. Provide images of proper podium placement.

- ▶ Podium should include a microphone with stand, unless otherwise requested by the speaker(s) – e.g., lapel or handheld.
- ▶ If possible, the podium should have light – either connected or overhead.
- ▶ Nothing should be placed on the podium except the script (i.e., no notebooks, laptops, glasses, etc.) unless specifically requested/approved by the speaker.
- ▶ A bottle of water should be provided (preferably on a shelf inside the podium, on table near podium, or at his/her seat).



### STAGE SEATING

Consider whether it would be best for speakers to sit in the audience and only come up to the stage when invited to speak, or if they should be seated onstage.

- ▶ Any stage seating should be set back from the podium, so that images of the person speaking have a “clean” background.
- ▶ If you have a panel of speakers onstage, it may be appropriate for them to sit at a table. It is important to have the table dressed with a floor-length linen, which provides a professional look.

### GUEST SEATING

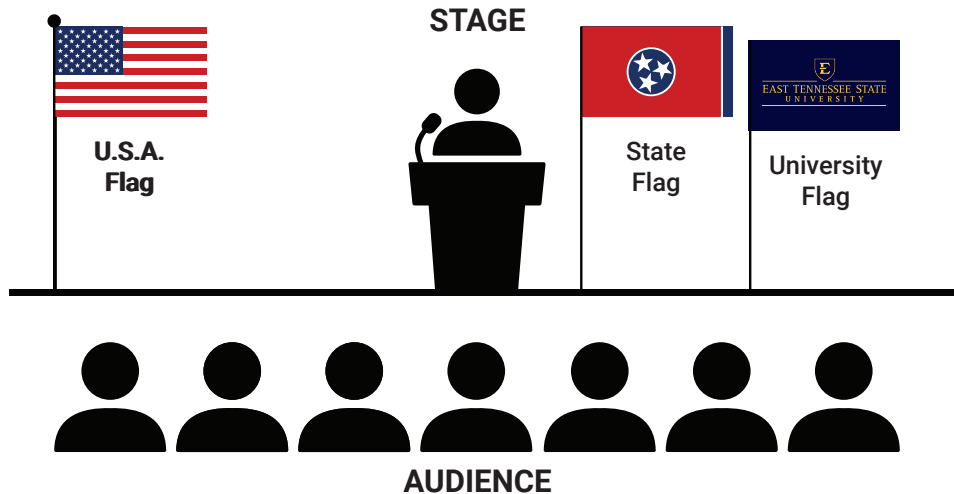
- ▶ Ensure that all seats can see the speaker/stage.
- ▶ Reserve seats for the speakers/platform party, special guests (e.g., donors, board members, community leaders), and university administration, when applicable.
- ▶ Print more “Reserved” signs than you think you need; you can always remove them if they are not being used, but it is hard to add an unexpected guest if no are seats left.
- ▶ If there are guests who need to be placed in a specific seat for the event, use their last names on the placards so that no one takes their seats.
- ▶ If anyone is to be recognized from the audience, ensure that the speaker knows where they are seated ahead of time.



## ROOM SETUP - FLAG PROTOCOL

### FLAG PROTOCOL

For major campus ceremonies and events, three flags are used on stage: the United States flag, the state flag, and the university flag. When displaying flags on a stage, the U.S. flag takes precedence and has the position of honor. From that point, the flags are placed in descending order of importance. From the audience's perspective looking at the speaker, the U.S. flag is located to the left (also known as stage right or house left). The state flag followed by the university flag is to the right of the speaker (known as stage left or house right). See the diagram below for the order.



- ▶ It is still appropriate to bunch the flags together if needed, but (a) they must still be in precedence order of importance and (b) the national flag must showcase the eagle top, and/or the national flag must be higher than the others, as pictured above.
- ▶ Poles, bases, finials, and fringes should all match (e.g., if there is a silver base on the national flag, all other flags should also be on silver bases).
- ▶ Flags should not be the same height. The national flag must be higher than the state flag, which should be higher than the university flag.
- ▶ Do not use spacers or otherwise alter the appearance of the flag.
- ▶ If you need assistance with flags or flag placement, contact the [ETSU Army ROTC](#).

## ROOM SETUP - SEATED MEAL

### ROOM PLAN

- ▶ Ensure that there is ample room for guests and catering staff to move between tables (at least 4 feet, optimally more).
- ▶ Round tables are preferred when possible to allow guests to more easily move between tables.
- ▶ If using rectangular tables, avoid placing many end-to-end as it can make it hard for guests to move around the room. See sample room Diagram E on page 41.



### PODIUM PLACEMENT

- Ensure that the podium is set up in such a way that photographers can get a clear shot of speakers and/or the entire stage party.
- If there is décor on stage, ensure that it is set back so that it does not obstruct the view of the speakers.
- Check table placement around the podium to make sure that all guests can see the speakers when seated.
- ▶ If possible, reduce the number of guests who will be seated in such a way that their backs are to the stage/podium/speaker.
- ▶ If there is a registration table, buffet, or bar, ensure that there is a plan for line management.
- ▶ If there is a line that may form, ensure that it does not obstruct the entrance/exit.

### BUFFET SERVICE

Buffet service provides some flexibility on the number eating and offers more menu options to guests. It is recommended when you have a large group and/or are unable to collect accurate or timely RSVP information. It is less formal and usually costs less than a plated meal as it often requires fewer catering staff.

- ▶ The event manager and catering staff should agree in advance on the best location for the buffet for optimal line management. See sample Diagram B on page 39.
- ▶ For a buffet of 200+, we recommend setting up to allow for double lines per station (i.e., guests can plate themselves from each side of the table).
- ▶ Ensure that ample time is built into the agenda for guests to stand in line and serve themselves.
- ▶ Buffets should include clear labels for all food and beverages. Vegan and gluten-free options should always be included.



## ROOM SETUP - SEATED MEAL, CONT.

### PLATED MEALS

Plated meals provide a more formal atmosphere and leave more time for guests to interact with each other during the event. The exact number of guests must be confirmed in advance, and care must be taken concerning dietary preferences. Most guests receive the same menu, unless arrangements have been made in advance with the catering team.

- ▶ Dietary restrictions/requests should be collected in advance whenever possible.
- ▶ Assigned seating with printed place cards is recommended for plated meals. This allows catering staff to know where to deliver any special meals.
- ▶ Provide catering staff with a seating chart and list of dietary restrictions ahead of the event.
- ▶ Plated meals should always have printed menu cards to ensure guests know what to expect and are aware of potential food allergens.
- ▶ Consider whether to pre-set salads and dessert or serve once guests are seated.
- ▶ Ensure that guest of honor or highest official is served first. Provide information about where that person is located in the room.
- ▶ Have candid conversations with catering team about how serving/pickup will affect your program (e.g., such as pre-plating salad and/or dessert, no service while speakers at podium.).



### ASSIGNED SEATING

Assigned seating is not required for every event. Some events benefit from open seating where guests can sit where they please. Other events have assigned tables and allow guests to choose where they sit at the table, or tent cards can be set at each place. If using assigned seating, observe the following:

- ▶ Make sure your table assignments are in a logical order (e.g., if your tables are numbered, the table layout should be in numerical order).
- ▶ Ensure tables are clearly labeled and you have a table schematic available at each entrance to your event room as well as staff stationed at each entrance to help guide guests to their tables.
- ▶ If you provide name tags, it is recommended that you print the table number on the back for easy reference.
- ▶ Each table should have a host who can make introductions and facilitate conversation.
- ▶ Relationships should be considered when assigning seats. For example, alumni from the Quillen College of Medicine should be seated with faculty, staff, students, or other alumni from the same college.
- ▶ Consider guest needs when assigning seats. For example, guests who may need to arrive late or leave early should be placed near the door; guests who may need an ASL interpreter or to read lips will need to be placed close to the podium/stage.
- ▶ Speakers and guests receiving recognition should be seated close to the podium/stage or “front” of the room, if there is one.
- ▶ The President and Provost should always have an assigned seat and should have tent cards with guest names at their tables.



## ROOM SETUP - SEATED MEAL, CONT.

### TABLE SETTINGS



- ▶ China service and cloth napkins are preferred whenever practical.
- ▶ Centerpieces (if used) should allow for visibility across the table and to all speakers.
- ▶ Napkins, cutlery, salt/pepper, any sweeteners, and water should be pre-set in most cases, unless it is a very informal buffet with disposable items.
- ▶ If the salad is not pre-set, a folded napkin should be placed in the center of each setting along with a printed program or menu.
- ▶ Drinks should always be set to the right of the place setting, and the bread plate to the left.
- ▶ Place cards should be centered above each place setting to prevent confusion.

## ROOM SETUP - MIX AND MINGLE

This is an informal event where guests move about the space to greet each other and interact. Seating is not required for every guest. Entertainment is recommended.

- ▶ Provide standing-height tables and seating that promotes small-group conversation.
- ▶ Ensure ample room for guests and catering staff to move between tables (at least 4 feet, optimally more).
- ▶ There should be a focal point of the event to promote conversation; this is often informal remarks made by the host reminding everyone why they are there (e.g., thanking a group of guests, welcoming new people to the community, promoting collaboration between groups, etc.).
- ▶ Hosts will need to move around the room to greet each guest and ensure that guests are introduced to each other.
- ▶ Provide small bite-sized finger foods that do not require utensils to eat. These could be passed by catering staff or presented on food stations placed throughout the room.
- ▶ Avoid messy food and anything that sticks between the teeth, as guests will be eating and talking at the same time.
- ▶ Provide small disposable plates and napkins with trash cans available around the room.



## ROOM SETUP - ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION

A small group meeting where the goal is to encourage a free-flowing exchange of ideas and everyone has an equal opportunity to share their perspective.

- ▶ Ensure that there is ample room for guests to move between tables (at least 4 feet, optimally more).
- ▶ Round tables are preferred to promote discussion and allow guests to more easily move between tables.
- ▶ Pre-set any reference materials or notepads/pencils that might be useful for the discussion.
- ▶ If there is a speaker, make sure that all guests can see the speaker when seated.
- ▶ Ensure that each table has a facilitator who can provide direction, answer questions, and encourage conversation.



## ROOM SETUP - RESEARCH FORUM

This is a formal event where a select group of students' stage presentations center on a predetermined topic. Often it is juried, and participants must be invited to stage their presentations.

- ▶ Reserve a large open space that has more than one entrance and encourages freedom of movement. For example, large groups might want to consider the Culp Ballroom or the Brinkley Center Ballroom; smaller groups may want to consider [Sherrod Library, Room 309](#).
- ▶ Provide ample space for each presentation, as well as enough space between presentations so they do not overlap each other and jurors can easily view the work.
- ▶ Ensure enough space for participants to easily move around the room.
- ▶ Make sure space assignments are in an easily identifiable order.
- ▶ Ensure presentations are clearly labeled and you have a room diagram available at each entrance to your event room.
- ▶ Station staff at each entrance to answer questions and help guide participants to their presentation areas.
- ▶ Clearly communicate to participants when and where they can set up. Provide explicit directions to the event space.





## ROOM SETUP - IT/A/V

- ▶ Check on Wi-Fi accessibility in your event space.
- ▶ Always check with your speakers on their preferred IT and A/V needs.
  - Do outside groups need access to certain websites? Check to see if they are blocked!
- ▶ All A/V should be tested prior to each event using the equipment on site.
  - Testing: Just because it worked in your office does not mean it will work at the event site. This is even truer if you are doing a presentation abroad!
- ▶ **Never** stream videos from websites such as YouTube. Even if it works when testing, it may not work during the event because of the number of guests using the internet and general internet instability.



## ROOM SETUP - AMBIANCE

Events should be inviting and festive. Special touches are always appreciated by your guests!

- ▶ Décor: Whatever décor you choose should enhance what you are trying to convey through your event.
  - Centerpieces (if used) should allow for visibility across the table and to all speakers.
  - Plants and floral arrangements can always help fill up a room, if needed.
- ▶ Balloon arches or pillars can be festive and congratulatory but are not considered formal.
- ▶ Music should be part of your program. Music is not necessarily a performance, but at least provide background music to go with whatever mood you are trying to set.
- ▶ Entertainment: It is always nice to include student performers in the program whenever possible, whether this be a music ensemble, artists, theater group, or dance team.
- ▶ Use ETSU colors when appropriate, but be careful that they are consistent and accurately reflect the correct shades of navy and gold. See [ETSU Brand Guide](#).
- ▶ Room temperature should be comfortable. If you have a large event, the air conditioner should be lowered at least one hour prior to event start. It will be cold for those first few guests, but by the time the bulk of your guests arrive, it will be the right temperature for the event.





## PARKING/SAFETY

- ▶ Full considerations should be made for all types of guests when designating parking for events (i.e., disabilities, VIPs, distance from event.)
- ▶ Consideration should also be made for other activities happening near your event that might impact parking (e.g., Is there road construction nearby? Is there a football game that night? Is University School in session? If so, will guests encounter pickup or drop-off traffic?).
- ▶ On the ETSU main campus, weekday parking enforcement times for designated faculty/staff and student parking spaces are 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. After 4:30 p.m. on weekdays and during weekends and administrative holidays, students and employees with a current parking decal may park in any designated faculty/staff or student parking space. Meters are free after 4:30 p.m.
- ▶ To reserve parking for guests on the main campus, complete a [space utilization form](#) and send to [spacerequest@etsu.edu](mailto:spacerequest@etsu.edu).
  - Always be clear about your expectations with signage and parking instructions (i.e., event name, specific space for them to block for parking, or greeting for attendant to give guests.).
  - For events with parking lists, always ensure parking attendants have the most accurate list of names for potential guests who will use that area. Email their supervisor a copy the day prior as well as hand-deliver a copy to the attendant just prior to your event.

## FACILITIES/CUSTODIAL

In most cases, custodial and facility maintenance support will be coordinated by the event venue, but if you have an outdoor event or an event in a space that does not have dedicated support staff, you will need to contact [Facilities Services](#) directly.

What needs to be ordered from Facilities?

- Utility golf carts
- Trash cans for outdoor events
- Movers to bring tables, chairs, podiums, and other large items from one campus location to another
- Running power to outdoor event locations
- Maintenance requests
- Snow removal
- ▶ Go to [Facilities Services](#) to place a work order. Provide explicit directions, including time, date, location, and contact. Be prepared to provide an index number to cover any costs related to your request.

# ACCOMMODATIONS/ACCESSIBILITY

To promote community and belonging, be thoughtful when planning events to proactively meet the needs of guests and remove barriers to participation.

- ▶ **Dietary restrictions:** It is important to provide food that can be enjoyed by everyone at the event. Be sure to inquire about dietary restrictions when collecting RSVPs and communicate to guests that the catering team can accommodate any dietary requests. If planning refreshments for a non-RSVP event, be sure to include vegan, gluten-free, sugar-free, and dairy-free options.
- ▶ **ASL:** It is important to ensure that everyone can understand the presentation at your event. Be sure to request an ASL interpreter from [Disability Services](#) if you know or suspect someone may need one.
- ▶ **Closed captions:** Be sure to include closed captions on all video presentations and livestreams. This is especially helpful when there is background music, conversation, or the amplification is not adequate for the space. WCAG 2.0 level AA requires a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 for normal text and 3:1 for large text. Please confirm that contrast levels are acceptable using the [WebAIM Contrast Checker](#) before displaying.
- ▶ **Accessible parking:** Ensure that accessible parking is provided for every event. Be sure to communicate where this is located to all guests, so they can self-identify. Some guests may also need transportation from the parking location to the event space, so plan ahead to meet this need. ETSU Disability Services maintains an online [Accessible Map](#) that can help our guests navigate the ETSU main campus.
- ▶ **Accessible entrance:** Ensure that there is a clearly marked path to your event that does not require navigating steps or curbs. If the accessible entrance is located on another side of the building, provide volunteers or staff to assist with wayfinding. If the guest needs to take an elevator, be sure to clearly mark which floor the event will be on and provide directions from the elevator to the event.
- ▶ **Accessible seating:** Ensure that there are some accessible seats that are close to the entrance and do not require going up any steps. Some guests will not be able to stand for any length of time. Provide adequate seating so they can rest as needed (e.g., while waiting for transportation from the parking area to the event or while waiting for the elevator).
- ▶ **Service Animals:** Service animals are welcome throughout campus. They are not required to wear vests and ETSU does not require any documentation that the dog is registered, licensed, or certified as a service animal. *DO NOT request documentation, require that the dog demonstrate its task, or inquire about the nature of the person's disability.*

## ETIQUETTE

Show respect to every guest at your event, no matter their abilities.

- ▶ Don't make assumptions. People with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do.
  - Don't make decisions for others about participating in any activity.
  - Don't assume he or she needs help.
  - Offer assistance only if someone appears to need it, and ask how you may help before you act.

- ▶ Be sensitive about physical contact.
  - Do not grab anyone. Offer an elbow if someone appears unsteady or in need of being guided through a space.
  - Avoid patting a person on the head or touching their wheelchair, scooter, or cane.
  - If someone has a service animal, do not pet or feed the animal.
  - If someone uses a guide dog or cane, walk on the opposite side to give them space to move.
- ▶ Use “people first” language. Refer to the individual first, then to his or her disability, when it is relevant and appropriate. For example:

Name or Title of Person	+	Verb	+	Assistive Device or Disability
Professor, student, child, applican, etc.		Has, uses, utilizes, etc.		Wheelchair, autism, developmental delay, etc.

- ▶ Think before you speak. Always speak directly to the person with a disability, not to his or her companion, aide, or sign language interpreter.
  - Don’t apologize if you use an expression such as “I gotta run” or “See you later” that relates to the person’s disability. These expressions are part of everyday language, and it is likely the apology will be more offensive than the expression.
  - Don’t portray people with disabilities as overly courageous, brave, special, or superhuman. This implies that it is unusual for people with disabilities to have talents or skills.
  - Avoid using the term “normal” to describe people who don’t have disabilities. It is better to say “people without disabilities” or “typical” if necessary to make comparisons.
  - Avoid the following terms: dwarf, midget, retarded, invalid, wheelchair bound, birth defect, handicapped, victim, cripple, and suffers from.

## HOSPITALITY

### NAME TAGS

Name tags should be provided whenever possible to help guests identify each other.

- ▶ Name tags are always worn on the right side.
- ▶ Name tags should be printed using an ETSU branded template that matches any place cards being used at the event.
- ▶ Details to include:
  - Line 1: Logo
  - Line 2: Full name
  - Line 3: Affiliation or title
- ▶ Be careful with guests who have honorific titles or nicknames. Honorific titles are those given due to office or education (Senator, Doctor, Reverend). It is recommended not to use honorific titles on name tags to prevent errors.



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

**Brian Noland**  
President,  
East Tennessee State  
University



- ▶ Check spelling! Typos are easy to overlook, especially if you are handling the tags and all other event details (your brain can only handle so much information). Take the time to double-check all spelling, or ask someone to double-check your work with fresh eyes.
- ▶ Be careful to use the guest's preferred name. Many guests do not use their legal names on a day-to-day basis. Double-check your guest list with someone who has a relationship with the guests to confirm if you have the correct name. For example, the College of Health Sciences Interim Dean should be listed as A. Lynn Williams. not Anita Williams.



## EVENT FAVORS

When possible, it is nice to present a small gift to your guests. Make sure that any gift is clearly related to the event and appropriate for your event and target audience (for example, a button or lapel pin to commemorate the event or a sweet treat to take away).

## GIFTS FOR SPECIAL GUESTS

- ▶ If you have a special guest from out of town, it is nice to provide a small welcome bag or basket for them at the front desk of their hotel. This should include a welcome note from the host, a copy of *ETSU Today* and/or the *ETSU Annual Report*, and small practical items that might be useful during their stay, like an ETSU-branded water bottle, notebook, pen, umbrella, or shirt.
- ▶ If you are honoring a special guest onstage during your event, it would be appropriate to provide a gift to them as part of the presentation. For example, if a space is being named after someone, they could be presented with a framed photograph or drawing of the building.
- ▶ When gifts will be provided to a guest of honor, be cognizant of the following:
  - Culture
  - Religion
  - Gifting history (i.e., If other university officials are giving your VIP a gift, ensure no double-ups occur.)
  - Travel requirements (i.e., Do they have space in the bags? Are the items perishable?)
  - Ethical restrictions (i.e., most elected officials can only receive gifts under a certain price point or have to return it/report it/pay for it)

# EVENT COMMUNICATIONS

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Everyone feels more comfortable and confident when they know what to expect. Guests should arrive with a good understanding of where to go, how to get there, when the event starts, how long it will last, what to wear, whether there will be refreshments, and what the event is about in general.

- ▶ Ensure all communication about the event is clear and concise. If there are too many words, most people will stop reading.
- ▶ Content should be free from jargon, acronyms, and other language that may be unfamiliar to the intended audience.
- ▶ If acronyms or abbreviations must be used, be sure to spell out the full word or phrase on first reference.
- ▶ Double-check that the reading and comprehension level is appropriate for your intended audience.
- ▶ When communicating, use respectful and affirming language that ensures all guests feel welcome. See the inclusive language guide on page 22.

## DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

Directional signage is needed for almost every event. Signage should be placed along all routes from each point of entry (regardless if directions were sent to guests prior).

- ▶ Signage requests: Contact [BMC Creative](#) and gain approval from [Facilities](#) required for physical signage attached to buildings.
- ▶ Be sure that the text on all directional signs is large enough to read at a distance.
- ▶ Wayfinding:
  - Use sandwich board signs to provide direction to event parking.
  - Clearly mark accessible parking.
  - Consider providing transportation from the event parking to the event if the distance between the two would be difficult for some guests.
  - If inside a building, provide signage outside clearly indicating which door should be used to enter.
  - If outside, provide signage along walkways surrounding the area pointing guests to the event.
  - Provide volunteers at the parking area, key walkways, and entrance to the building to direct guests.
  - It is useful to post signs or volunteers at stairs and elevators to indicate which floor the event is on.
  - Post signs and volunteers at the entrance to the event, so people passing by can understand what is happening in the space.

## INVITATIONS

### TIMELINE

Follow industry standards of invitation timing protocols.

- ▶ 8 weeks in advance: save the date (for internal guests, a save the date is not always necessary if you put it on everyone's calendar in advance)
- ▶ 4 weeks in advance: invitation (if no save the date)
- ▶ 3 weeks in advance: invitation (if save the date was sent)
- ▶ 2 weeks in advance: reminder and/or follow-up calls
- ▶ 1 week in advance (or less): RSVP deadline, reminder and/or follow-up calls as needed
- ▶ 2 days in advance: email to participants with event details
- ▶ Post-event: Thank participants for attending

### EMAIL VS. PRINTED

In most cases, email invitations are preferred. However, if you have an especially formal event, printed invitations help elevate the experience.

### FORMAT/DESIGN

The Office of University Marketing and Communications (UMC) offers [Marq.com](https://marq.com) for branded invitations, flyers, presentation slides, directional signs, and more. This is available to everyone. Contact your [UMC Partnership Manager](#) to set up your Marq account.

- ▶ BMC can provide additional design support if needed.
- ▶ It is important that all departments/persons named on an invitation approve the mock-up PRIOR to it being disseminated. (If the President and Provost are hosting the event, they or their designees should approve. If the Dean of the College is hosting the event, they or their designee should approve. If a speaker is coming for a lecture, they or their PR team should approve.)
- ▶ Ensure text is large enough to easily read (at least 10-point font, optimally 12-point font).
- ▶ Ensure that writing is clear and concise. Remove any unnecessary language to ensure that the reader can take in the most important information (i.e., event name, time, date, and location).

### CONTENT

Key items to include on your invitation are below.

- ▶ **Approved logo:** Please confirm which logo is appropriate for the event. The ETSU Brand Guidelines page contains information about the appropriate use of ETSU's logo and marks and a logo request form, if needed.
- ▶ **Hosted by:** Listed in precedence order. For example: "President Brian Noland and College of XXX Dean XXX cordially invite you to ..." If invitees are of relatively equal rank, then list alphabetically.
- ▶ **Invite phrase:** For example: "cordially invite you" or "invite you" or "invite you and a guest"
- ▶ **Occasion:** Type/Purpose of event. For example: Is it a dinner, ceremony, ribbon cutting, reception, etc.?
- ▶ **Date:** Use the full date the event will be held. For example: Monday, July 1, 2023. Do not abbreviate the month or day (e.g., August, not Aug.).



## INVITATIONS, CONT.

- ▶ **Time:** Spell out the time (informal: 6:00 p.m.; formal: six o'clock in the evening). For structured programs, we suggest including end times (6:00 – 8:00 p.m.). Place the time on a separate line from the date when possible. This makes it easier to read.
- ▶ **Location:** Include the name and full street address of the venue. For on-campus events: Campus Building, Room (as applicable).
- ▶ **Special Instructions:** Any important notes for your guests. For example: parking information, ticketing information, clear bag policy, age restrictions (21+), or anything they need to bring.
- ▶ **RSVP:** Provide an email and phone number, along with deadline to confirm attendance. For formal printed programs, include an RSVP card and envelope. For example: "We appreciate your RSVP to XXX@etsu.edu or 423-XXX-XXXX by June 15."
- ▶ **Attire:** It is important to let your guests know how to dress for your event. This will help them feel comfortable and confident in attending. Examples: Business Casual, Business Professional, Formal. If there is something you specifically do NOT want them wearing (e.g., casual, but no jeans) then make it known to your guests.

## RSVP LISTS

What info needs to be gathered?

- ▶ **Full name (check spelling!):** This will be used for name tags and place cards.
- ▶ **Guest name(s):** This will be used for name tags and place cards.
- ▶ **Number in group:** This should be listed so that you can easily set up your document to calculate the total number attending your event.
- ▶ **Title and/or affiliation:** For example: University School Faculty, SGA President, VA Medical Director, Owner of XX local business, Leader of XX community group, etc.
- ▶ **Dietary restrictions** (communicate this with University Food Service)
- ▶ **Special accommodations/mobility restrictions:** Key information to ensure you meet the needs of every guest. This information will be used when planning seating arrangements, wayfinding, transportation, and staging. For example: needs for assistance walking or on stairs, inability to stand for long, need for an ASL interpreter, bringing a service dog, or using a mobility device like crutches or wheelchair.

## FOLLOW UP WITH PARTICIPANTS

Ensure you have multiple touch points surrounding the event.

- ▶ **Reminder to RSVP:** Reach out by email or phone to ensure you have an RSVP for those invited to participate.
- ▶ **Pre-event details:** Provide explicit instructions and details for all who are participating in the event. This includes the following groups:
  - Hosts
  - Speakers/entertainers
  - Staff/volunteers
  - Guests
- ▶ **Post-event** survey or thank you should be sent to all participants and guests of the event.
- ▶ **Distributing/posting photos:** If photos were taken during the event, it is always nice to share specific photos of guests or participants with the individuals.

# EVENT PROMOTION

The Office of University Marketing and Communications does not coordinate events. However the office does provide some assistance in promoting major university events. Working in partnership with the Event Manager, the [UMC Partnership Manager](#) will develop a Project Statement of Work for the marketing and promotion of major campus events. For all other events, University Marketing and Communications provides resources to campus partners to help them promote their event. Examples include lectures, concerts, events for internal audiences, conferences, and celebrations.

- ▶ UMC Partnership Managers (PM): Provide guidance on promotion
- ▶ Design tools for promotional materials such as invitations or signs.
  - To create your own: Marq templates (request access from PM)
  - To employ help of graphic designer: BMC Creative
  - In all design elements, always consult and adhere to the ETSU Brand Guidelines
  - If you design your own and do not use a Marq template, request identity approval (no charge for identity review) at [BMC Creative](#).
- ▶ Promoting an event to internal audiences
  - Submit an event to the [ETSU Calendar of Events](#) so that it is also included in the BucWire weekly e-newsletter.
  - Submit an event for inclusion on digital signage across campus.
- ▶ Tag ETSU social media accounts (some events might be good for an ETSU collaboration on social media – talk to your PM).
  - Promoting an event to an external audience
  - Contact your Partnership Manager two months prior to event to discuss potential and timeline for media coverage and social media ad buys (if appropriate for a highly publicized event)
  - Identify an internal point of contact for media interviews.

**Other partnerships:** Are there groups on campus or around the community for whom your event would be of interest either because of content or timing/location? Reach out to them and invite them to be a part of the event! For example, if you are hosting an event to announce a new program at Quillen College of Medicine, consider inviting undergraduate students who are members of pre-health student organizations.

# EVENT PROGRAM

## SPEAKER ORDER

The agenda should always go in reverse order based on title, with the lowest member providing the welcome and each speaker introducing someone of higher title leading up to the guest or keynote speaker. (For example: A student would provide the welcome and then introduce the faculty speaker, who would introduce the department head, who would introduce the Dean, who would introduce the Provost, who would introduce the President, who would introduce the donor or elected official or keynote speaker.)

- ▶ Do not have too many speakers. Select one of each of the following categories: student/representative of the group, host, ETSU leader, guest speaker. Only include the 3-4 individuals most intimately connected to your event.
- ▶ If you have multiple speakers, be sure they are all necessary and convey separate messages.
- ▶ Try to keep events brief. Remarks should be concise and transitions as quick as possible. Formal presentations should be less than an hour whenever possible.

Speakers: See “Confirm Participants” on page 10.

The President and Provost do not need to both speak at every event they attend together. Decide who is most appropriate for the occasion. If you feel they both need to speak, be certain they are clearly asked to cover separate topics.

- ▶ To request the President to speak, complete the form on the [President’s webpage](#).
- ▶ To request the Provost to speak, contact the office coordinator.

*Indicate whether remarks are needed with your request.*

## SPEAKER CONTRACTS

When navigating speaker contracts (re: media availability and/or rights to photos) for major speakers and performers, reach out to your UMC Partnership Manager for assistance. In these cases, promo materials may require advance approval, and we may be limited in the channels we can use. We need to discuss press and social media expectations and agreements. Staff and press passes may be required.

The speaker contract wish list includes the following:

- ▶ Being able to use event photos and video in marketing materials
- ▶ Media availability for local media outlets
- ▶ Possible interviews on WETS-FM, for *ETSU Today*, and other campus publications.

## SCRIPTED REMARKS

If President and/or Provost have confirmed attendance and will be delivering remarks, University Marketing and Communications will assist with their remarks. Other speakers will need to craft their own remarks. The Event Manager should ask to receive remarks a week prior to the event, then compile each set of remarks into a full event script, check to make sure there aren’t redundancies, and add stage directions, including how to enter/exit stage, where to go on stage, etc.

- ▶ Email the full script to speakers several days in advance of the event, so they have a full understanding of the event as a whole.



- ▶ Print out the full script and distribute it to each speaker. Do not rely on one notebook at the podium. This can cause confusion and take time away from the program for the speakers to find their place.
- ▶ Brief speakers on stage directions, how to use audio/visual equipment, where beverages will be located at/near podium, and if any gifts will be presented on stage, where they will be located and who will hold them.
- ▶ The host's script should include recognition of any special guests who will be attending the event (for example: ETSU Board of Trustees, government officials, etc.) Brief the speaker on where these guests will be sitting so they can indicate their presence as they recognize them. Update on the day of the event so as not to leave out any last minute attendees.

## RIBBON CUTTING

- ▶ Use large gold scissors and wide navy-blue ribbon. You may contact University Events to borrow.
- ▶ Only one or two special guests should cut the ribbon. The Event Manager should identify the most important person to perform this task.
- ▶ The Event Manager should take an active role in helping the stage party line up for the ribbon cutting – stepping in to direct everyone on where to stand.
- ▶ Those holding the ribbon should be in the following order: students, faculty and staff on the ends; ETSU leadership on the inside of them; and ETSU Trustees and special guests in the middle.
- ▶ It is tradition for the ETSU President (or the highest-level person attending) to distribute small pieces of the ribbon to those holding or cutting the ribbon as souvenirs of the occasion.

## AUDIO/VISUAL

- ▶ Always check with your speakers on their preferred A/V needs.
- ▶ Video production: Because videos appeal to multiple senses, your guests are more likely to remember this aspect of your event. Therefore, it is imperative to produce good quality pieces (i.e., sound, high-res images, listing names of speakers, smooth transitions.). In other words, if you are going to do it, do it well.
- ▶ Slide decks/presentations:
  - When creating presentation slides, consider contacting the facility's audiovisual department to determine the aspect ratio (4:3, 16:9, or 16:10) so your presentation is optimized with the room's projector and screen capabilities. However, when converting to 16:9 from a presentation originally created in 4:3, stretching occurs with graphics and pictures, making faces look wider and charts or graphs appear incorrectly. It is best to start the presentation at the proper aspect ratio for the projected source.
  - Display the event name and ETSU and/or department logo at the start and end of presentations.
  - Download ETSU's [PowerPoint Template](#) and [Branded PowerPoint](#) slides to provide a polished look that is consistent with the [ETSU Brand Guidelines](#).
- ▶ All A/V should be tested prior to each event using the equipment on site. Just because it worked in your office, does not mean it will work at the event site. A run-through should be done with the A/V team and speakers prior to the event.

- Some locations provide A/V equipment and support. These include the following:
  - D.P. Culp Student Center
  - Martin Center for the Arts

## RUN OF SHOW

A run of show—also called a run sheet or cue sheet—is a living document that outlines every minute of an entire event from start to finish. Think of it like this: The run sheet is to event planning what a storyboard is to filmmaking: a front-to-back breakdown of the event's progression. Without a run-of-show document, you're basically relying on people's ability to improvise in the moment as opposed to following along with finely crafted scripts. The run sheet acts as a guardrail by establishing the parameters of your event before the event. Having event details in one place where everyone can find them is essential to hosting a successful event.

- There should be at least three columns in a run-of-show document: what needs to be done, who needs to do it, and how much time it will take. If your event has more than one location, then a column for location should be provided. For example:

4:00 – 5:00 PM	Band setup and sound check	Auditorium	Band Director
4:30 – 5:00 PM	Set up registration	Lobby	Jane Doe
5:00 PM	Lobby doors open to guests	Lobby	Event Manager
5:00 – 6:00 PM	Guest registration and coat check	Lobby	Jane Doe
5:30 PM	Auditorium doors open to guests	Auditorium	Event Manager
5:30 – 5:55 PM	Band plays	Auditorium	Band Director
5:56 PM	Ask guests to take their seats	Auditorium	M.C.
5:58 PM	Lights dim to half	Auditorium	Technician
6:00 PM	Auditorium doors close	Auditorium	Event Manager
6:00 PM	Welcome	Auditorium	M.C.
6:05 PM	Presentation #1	Auditorium	Speaker Name
6:25 PM	Q & A	Auditorium	M.C. & Speaker Name
6:30 PM	Registration closes, clear area, and prepare for reception	Lobby	Jane Doe

## PRINTED PROGRAM

If you have a formal program, it is standard practice to provide a printed program to each guest. Typically, this is distributed as guests arrive at an auditorium, placed on each guest chair, or included in the table setting if guests are seated for a meal. The printed program does not need to include the same level of detail as the run of show. It usually includes the title of the event, date/time, and names of the speakers in order of appearance. See templates in the Resources section, page 45.

# AT THE EVENT

## SERVICE EXCELLENCE

- ▶ Any staff who may have direct interaction with your guests (greeters, VIP escorts, tour guides, drivers.) should be polite, dressed professionally, cheerful, and knowledgeable about your department/institution.
- ▶ Remember to treat every guest like they are important, regardless of their status. Everyone should be treated fairly, respectfully, and politely.
- ▶ Create memorable experiences. From the moment a guest enters an event/meeting to the moment they leave, their experience should not only have special touches (i.e., warm welcome, gifts, photos.), but should also be consistent (i.e., their entire time in the room should be positive and enjoyable).
- ▶ Leaders and special guests:
  - Research the VIPs in attendance, including photos, so staff who may not be familiar with the VIPs will be able to spot them.
  - Always ensure your VIP has what they need for their event (e.g., names of who they will be seated next to, event program, remarks.).
  - Prepare event staff to answer questions about the university. If asked a question to which you do not know the answer, let the guest know you will find out and get back to them as soon as possible. Always open the door for your guests, and allow them to enter first.
  - Respect their personal space.
  - Do not be too pushy or territorial with VIPs. Give them the respect of being self-sufficient while still offering guidance and assistance.
    - ♦ If directing them to a location, it is appropriate to walk a half step in front of them. Never walk in front or block them; always walk to their side.
    - ♦ If you are also with an administrator who knows where to go, allow them to lead.
    - ♦ If you need to get the VIP/administrator to their seat location but they are in conversation, it is ideal to stand behind the person your VIP is speaking to and make eye contact to give them the opportunity to wrap up the conversation on their own. However, if you are pressed for time, give them at a minimum one minute before politely interrupting the conversation. These cues should always be discussed with your VIP so that they are aware as to why you may be doing this.

## ETSU PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

The Event Manager should be prepared to greet the President and Provost upon arrival, brief them on the event (timeline, site check, etc.), and support them as needed throughout their time at the event.

- ▶ Be sure that the person briefing the President or Provost has the authority to make any desired changes the President or Provost may request on-site and day-of.
- ▶ Provide a checklist of VIPs with whom the President or Provost would need to meet and mingle. A schematic of the room and where they will be seated is essential to be able to take the President or Provost to those locations.
- ▶ Be sure to provide bios/research on the VIPs in case further information on a guest is required. This is often coordinated through the Advancement research team.



## STAFFING/VOLUNTEERS

Staffing/volunteers are your lifeline for the event, but also brand ambassadors for the university. Their excitement and attitude toward the event and the guests will impact your event and the university's brand. Make sure that they feel supported and cared for (and be sure to pre-plan for appropriate breaks including restroom and meal breaks). If your event is longer than 3 hours, you should provide your team something to eat and drink.

► Prepare your staff and volunteers.

- Provide clear communication ahead of the event so that staff and volunteers feel confident in their roles and responsibilities, know where to go, what to do, when to be there, and the people with whom they will be working.
- They should know who the points of contact are for the event. Everyone working the event (staff, volunteers, vendors.) should know who to call if they are asked a question they don't know the answer to, or if they need assistance if an issue arises.
- A full run-through with your staff is always recommended prior to your event. Let them understand the purpose for the event, what the program is, and who the important guests are. Help them feel confident in their roles at the event.
- 55 percent of a first impression is based on the way you look. Ensure that staff and volunteers look their best by providing clear communication on what to wear (e.g., formal wear, business dress, business casual, etc.).
  - ◆ Dress for the occasion, but always professionally. Don't hesitate to provide examples.

Looking professional does not always mean wearing a suit; if it is a barbecue, your team should still be put together (i.e., shirts ironed, well-fitted bottoms, event-appropriate shoes.).

- Remind staff and volunteers to wear their name tags on the right side. Provide if needed.
  - University pins can also be worn. Remember that you are our brand ambassadors, so it is important you showcase your pride! Pins are worn on the left. It is also nice to have pins available for guests at the event.
  - If appropriate, provide branded matching shirts for easy identification.
- Provide information to all staff and volunteers working an event so they are prepared to answer guest questions in regard to the event and/or university (or be able to get someone who can help). This includes the following:
- Overview of the subject/purpose of the event
  - Overall outline of the event: start time, agenda, speakers
  - Overview of seating or location of registration/seating information
  - Location of any refreshments and restrooms or ancillary spaces

## STAFFING/VOLUNTEERS ROLES

- ▶ Wayfinding: Depending on the size of your event, you may need to have someone outside of the venue or at parking, especially if guests are not familiar with the location or if it is an event with lots of VIPs. You will also need people inside the venue to help guests find the correct room.
- ▶ Entrances and registration tables are normally where most questions are asked. Staff assigned to registration/entrances **MUST** know the event basics: seating arrangements, who your speakers/VIPs are, guests that may need assistance upon arrival, where bathrooms/exits are.
- ▶ Registration: You will also need someone at a registration table to welcome guests and hand out name tags. It is ideal to have a representative available who is familiar with the guests to welcome them to your event. Initial recognition always makes a guest feel special.
- ▶ Event host/emcee: This is arguably the most important role. This person ensures that the group knows when it is time to start the program, when it is time to eat, when it is time to move to another room (if needed), and what comes next. This person also acknowledges and thanks all the appropriate people, ensuring that everyone is comfortable and connected.
- ▶ Table hosts or ushers: Assist in welcoming guests, helping guests find their seats, answering questions, and ensuring that introductions are made.
- ▶ Stage handlers: Assist guests on and off the stage and help make sure that the stage party gets the correct award to the correct person.

## COMMUNICATION DURING THE EVENT

Everyone working the event (staff, volunteers, vendors.) should know who to call if they are asked a question they don't know the answer to or need assistance in troubleshooting.

- ▶ Emergency contact cards, text groups, and walkie-talkies are just a few examples of how to inform your staff of where to go if they need help.
- ▶ Be sure to exchange cell phone numbers prior to the event.

## EVENT PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Be sure to capture your event!

Please contact your [University Marketing and Communications Partnership Manager](#) (PM) to discuss your needs. UMC is not able to provide photography and videography for every event that occurs on campus. Priority is given to events that will provide assets to help university-wide marketing efforts.

- Requests for photography should be made at least two weeks prior to the event; videography requests must be made at least one month prior to the event.
- Do not contact university photographers or videographers directly.
- If UMC is not able to assist, contact BMC Creative to check availability and to get an estimate for services. Or you can assign a staff member or volunteer on your team to collect images throughout the event.

- ▶ A discussion with your photography team is important to conduct prior to the event. To get the desired photos, it is critical to let your photographer(s) know of your vision (i.e., how you will use the photos). This will help them choose the best lighting and angles.
  - Avoid drinks and name tags in photos, especially for those events that will use photos as marketing materials; consider the message you are trying to portray.
- ▶ Respect guests' personal space and requests. For example, guests in private conversation rarely like having photos taken. There will also be guests who prefer not to be photographed. Respect their personal wishes.
- ▶ Many guests will often ask for copies of the photos taken. Have a plan! Prior to the event, decide whether you will send photos upon request or to all guests. Make sure your staff is aware of the method so that, if asked, they can respond and act accordingly.
- ▶ Though not necessary, backdrops are great for official event photos — and can liven up a dull corner of a room! If you are planning to purchase one, we do suggest that you purchase a matte finish (less glare in photos) and ensure you can properly store it after each use (so that it does not get wrinkled/damaged). Be sure that the framing of your photos does not cut anyone off or show the ends of the backdrop. This is especially important when you are considering mailing the guest of honor photos or promote the photos in marketing materials. Think: Can this photo be framed?



## LIVESTREAMING

UMC does not provide livestreaming of events, but some venues such as the Martin Center or Culp Cave have built-in livestreaming capabilities. Start by asking the venue manager for your event location. For spaces that do not support livestreaming, contact [ITS](#) for more information.



# POST-EVENT

## CLEANUP

- ▶ Communicate in advance with volunteers about helping with the cleanup of the event space. Assign specific tasks ahead of time so that your team feels empowered to clean up on their own. This will help tremendously as some things can be put away while the event is in progress (and you are busy with other priorities).
- ▶ Clean up as you go, when possible. Wayfinding and registration can be cleaned up after the event begins.
- ▶ University Food Service will clean up all catering items and take care of linens.
- ▶ Confirm when vendors will pick up their items. Ensure that their proposed pickup schedule does not impact other events.
- ▶ Confirm if custodial is removing trash and cleaning the space after the event. If not, have volunteers pick up trash and sweep as needed.
- ▶ Return items you brought with you.

## LOST AND FOUND

Should anyone find a lost phone, credit card, purse, or anything of value they may turn it in to the Event Manager. at the end of the event. The Event Manager should contact Public Safety and ask them to come get the item. The Event Manager should let key collaborators know that the item was found and that it was turned in to Public Safety. This way, if they get a call about it, everyone knows about it and can direct the guest to the right place.

## CLOSING OUT THE EVENT

- ▶ Ensure invoices and/or payments are processed.
- ▶ Update your website, if applicable.
- ▶ Schedule recap meetings with key collaborators and stakeholders.
- ▶ Update your event timeline, noting what works and what can be improved upon next time.
- ▶ Update your budget with all actuals from the event to provide an accurate starting place for planning future events.
- ▶ To download a sample Event Task List, visit [ETSU Events](#).

# RECOGNITIONS AND CONVERSATIONS

Precedence means the standard order of rank of the group in question. This is important to know for proper seating arrangements, but more so for remark recognitions.

- ▶ One's position in an order of precedence is not necessarily an indication of functional importance, but rather an indication of ceremonial or historical relevance.
- ▶ There is an official precedence for all events, but it is important to know that each guest also may have "relative precedence" at a given event. Relative precedence is their order of importance related to the specific meeting/event and is often conferring a higher degree of precedence to a person than their current position dictates. For example, the guest of honor at the Celebration of Service is the person with the longest service history, no matter what their title.
- ▶ In some cases, a donor may trump an elected official or community leader, depending on the event. For example, the guest of honor at a ribbon cutting would be the donor who provided the funds to build or renovate the facility.

## RECOGNITIONS

For recognitions, keep similar groups together (e.g., elected officials should be recognized at the same time, donors should be recognized at the same time).

Always go in order from least importance to most importance as relative to the event.

- ▶ Examples (in precedent order)
  - U.S. State Government
    - ♦ Governor
    - ♦ Lieutenant Governor
    - ♦ Speaker of the House
    - ♦ U.S. Senator
    - ♦ State Cabinet Members
    - ♦ Member of the House of Representatives
    - ♦ Mayor of the City (when in own city)
    - ♦ State Senator
    - ♦ Mayor of the City (when outside their city)
    - ♦ State Representatives
  - Business/Corporate
    - ♦ Chairman of the Board
    - ♦ President
    - ♦ CEO
    - ♦ Executive Vice President
    - ♦ Senior Vice President
    - ♦ Regional Vice President
    - ♦ Director
    - ♦ Manager

## RECOGNITION, CONT.

- ETSU
  - ♦ Board of Trustees
  - ♦ President
  - ♦ Provost
  - ♦ Senior Vice President
  - ♦ Vice President
  - ♦ Vice Provost
  - ♦ Associate Vice President
  - ♦ Assistant Vice President
  - ♦ Deans
  - ♦ Executive Directors of Programs
  - ♦ Department Chair
  - ♦ Director

## THE PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONALISM

You, your staff, and your volunteers are all ambassadors for the university. Be sure to represent both yourself and the university in the best possible way.

- ▶ Your eye contact:
  - Tells the other person you are listening
  - Makes you a better listener
  - Focuses attention on the individual and makes him or her feel important while you look in control
- ▶ Small talk is what people say to each other to be polite. It can break the ice. It can establish a connection. It doesn't require original or profound conversation. Practice these tips to improve your small-talk ability:
  - Focus on the other person and less on yourself
  - Don't interrupt
  - Do listen
  - Think before you speak
  - Always close a conversation before walking away from the other person
- ▶ Avoid these subjects with others you don't know very well:
  - Your health or diet habits
  - The cost of things
  - Personal questions such as, "How much money do you make?"
  - Mean gossip
  - Off-color jokes
  - Controversial issues
- ▶ Introductions: It is important to make introductions throughout an event. It is your duty to introduce yourself and to introduce others as appropriate.



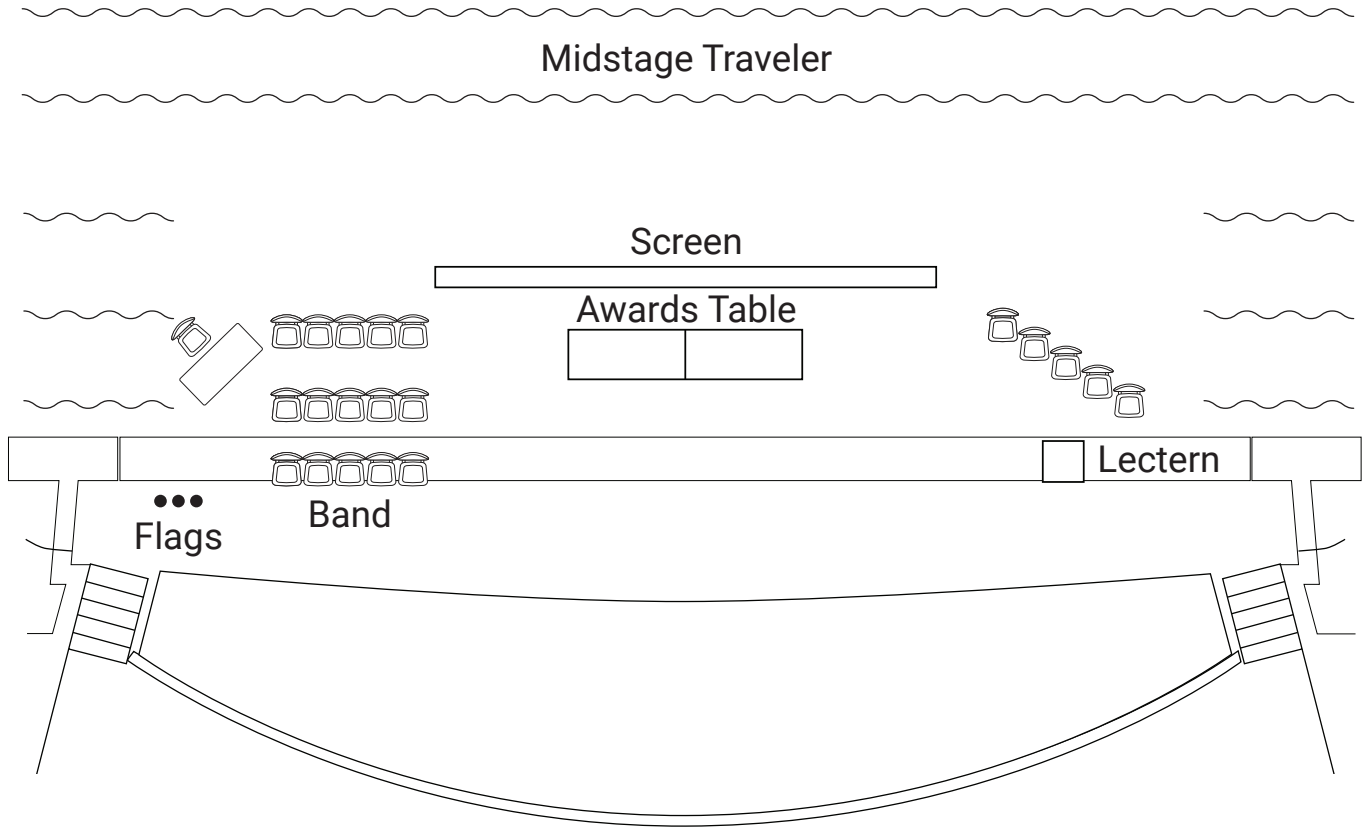
## THE PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONALISM, CONT.

- ▶ The handshake: Handshaking is a form of communication that needs no explanation and one that is never misunderstood. It is used when greeting someone, congratulating someone, or saying goodbye.
  - The right hand should always be free, and the left hand should hold only one item.
  - The name badges should be on the right side as that is the line of vision your eyes go to when shaking hands.
  - Shake from the elbow, not the wrist or shoulder. Two smooth pumps.
- ▶ Addressing Officials in Conversation
  - A Judge (of a lower court, not a supreme court): "How do you do, Judge (Surname)?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Judge (Surname)." Conversation: "Judge (Surname)" or "Judge"
  - Speaker of the House: "How do you do, Mr./Madam Speaker?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Mr./Madam Speaker." Conversation: "Mr./Madam Speaker"
  - A Mayor of a City: "How do you do, Mr./Madam Mayor or Mayor (Surname)?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Mr./Madam Mayor or Mayor (Surname)." Conversation: "Mr./Madam Mayor," "Mayor (Surname)" or "Mayor"
  - Chairman or Member of City Council: "How do you do, Mr./Mrs./Ms./etc. (Surname)?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Mr./Mrs./ Ms./etc. (Surname)." Conversation: "Mr./Mrs./Ms./etc. (Surname)"
  - Military Personnel: "How do you do, (Rank) (Surname)?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, (Rank) (Surname)." Conversation: "(Rank) (Surname)" or "(Rank)"
  - Detectives, Police Officers, and Firefighters: "How do you do, (Rank) (Surname)?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, (Rank) (Surname)." Conversation: "(Rank) (Surname)" or "(Rank)"
  - Private Citizens: "How do you do, Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr./etc. (Surname)?" or "Good morning/afternoon/evening, Mr./ Mrs./Ms./Dr./etc. (Surname)." Conversation: "Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr./etc. (Surname)"

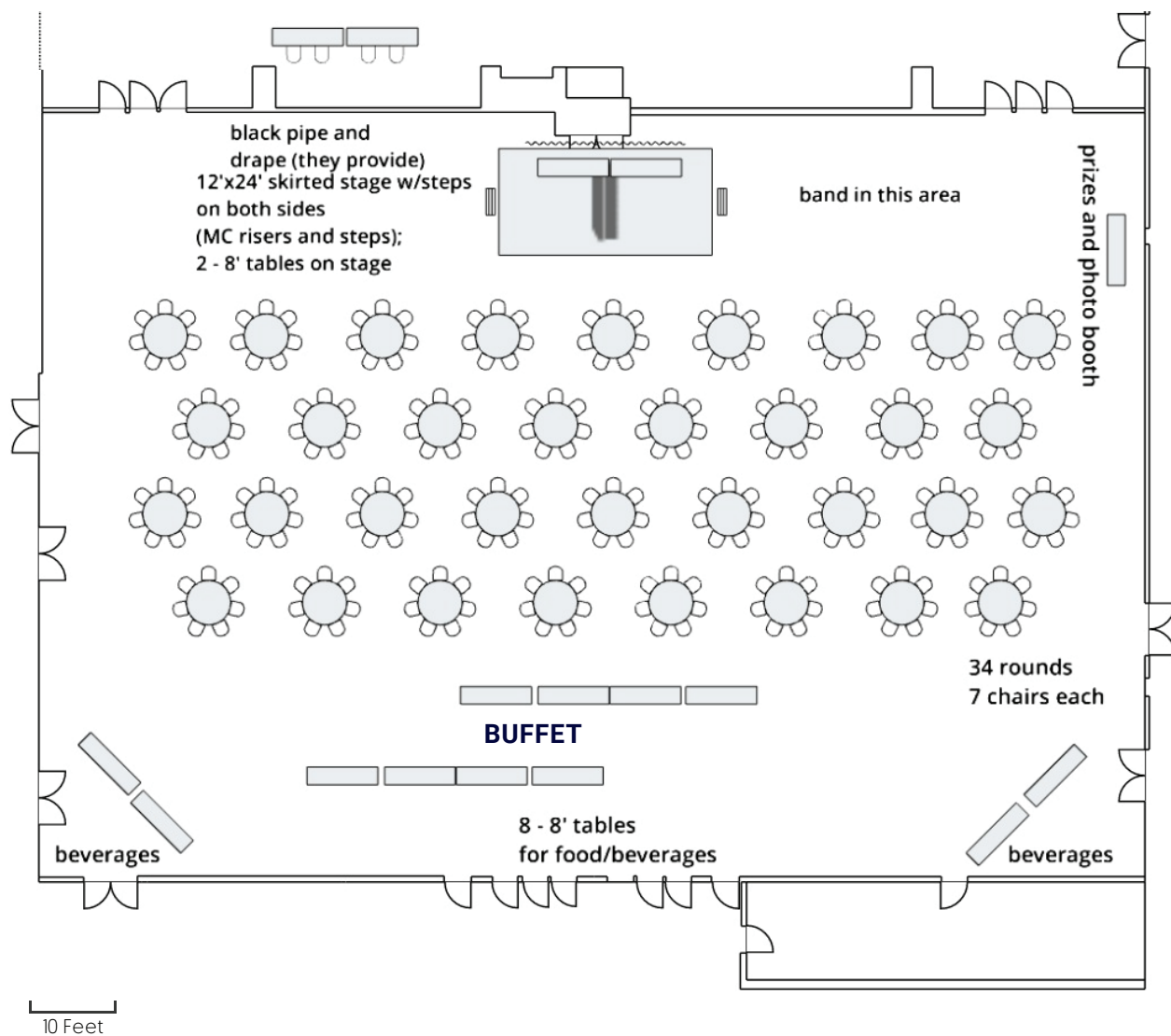
*Note: Wait to be invited to use first/given names in situations where difference in age, rank, or cultural traditions may call for formal forms of address in conversation.*

# RESOURCES

## STAGE SETUP EXAMPLE A

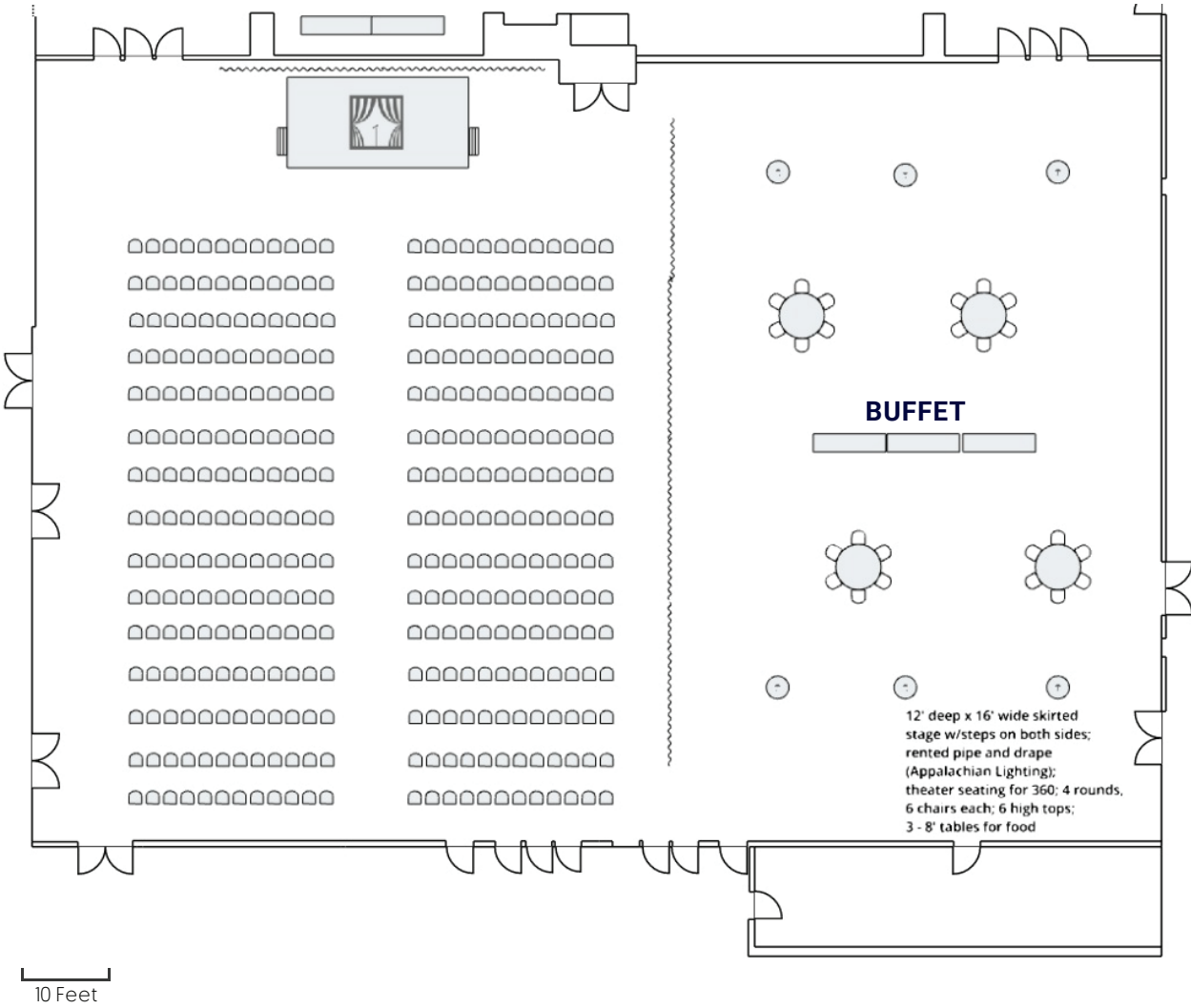


# TABLE SEATING, WITH STAGE AND BUFFET EXAMPLE B





THEATER STYLE WITH STAGE AND RECEPTION MIX AND MINGLE  
EXAMPLE C





## *Menu*

Bread Basket with Butter

### **SALAD**

Grilled Caesar Salad Wedge  
with a Romano Pecorino Tuile  
and Smoky Caesar Dressing

### **ENTRÉE**

Beef Tenderloin and Lobster Ravioli  
in a Madeira demi-glace  
with Roasted Fingerling Potatoes  
and Noisette Havical Vert

### **DESSERT**

Crème brûlée  
Lemon Blueberry Cake









EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT BRIAN NOLAND  
AND FIRST LADY DONNA NOLAND  
CORDIALLY INVITE YOU AND A GUEST  
TO JOIN THEM FOR AN EVENING HONORING THE

*Distinguished  
President's Trust*



**April 12, 2024**

**6:30 pm**

D.P. Culp Student Center, Ballroom  
412 J.L. Seehorn Jr. Rd, Johnson City



*RSVP by April 3 by reply card*

*or call 423-439-5714*

*\$75 per person | Black tie optional*



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

*Ribbon Cutting for Lamb Hall*

Thursday, September 14, 2023 4:00 P.M.

**Welcome**

Mary Brannock  
Public Health, Class of '24

Erica Carter  
Audiology, Class of '25

**Remarks**

Jeremy Ross  
Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Kimberly D. McCorkle  
Provost and Senior Vice President  
for Academic Affairs

Rebecca Alexander  
State Representative

Dr. Brian Noland  
President

**Ribbon Cutting**

## SAMPLE RSVP LIST

Attending	Full Name*	Guest Name(s)*	Title and/or Affiliation	Dietary Restrictions**	Special Accommodations/Mobility Restrictions**
1	Jane Doe		VA Medical Director	Vegetarian	
2	Maz Mustermann	Erika Mustermann	Owner of Local Business	Kosher	Should be seated near the VA Medical Director
X	Joe Brown		President of Local Community Group		
2	Gipsz Jakab	Hanna Jakab	University School Faculty		Will bring a service dog
1	Richard Smith		Manager of Local Business	Shellfish allergy	Seat near the rear, as she will be arriving late***
2	Sandra Mills	Frank Mills	Director of Marketing	Sandra-Gluten Free	
1	Troy Kent		SGA President		Needs an ASL interpreter
9	Total				
*Ensure that names are typed as you wish them to appear on name tags. This allows you to use mail merge to create name tags & table cards.					
**Always ask about dietary restrictions and special accommodations. Guests will not always remember to notify the planner of their needs.					
***Make note of seating requests whenever possible.					



# ONLINE REFERENCES

- ▶ ETSU Events  
[etsu.edu/events](https://etsu.edu/events)
- ▶ If you need assistance with flags or flag placement, contact the ETSU Army ROTC.  
<https://www.etsu.edu/cbat/rotc/contactus.php>

## SPACE RESERVATIONS

- ▶ The D.P.Culp Student Center  
[etsu.edu/students/student-center/reserve-space-on-campus.php](https://etsu.edu/students/student-center/reserve-space-on-campus.php)
- ▶ The Martin Center  
[etsu.edu/martin-center/venue-rental/default.php](https://etsu.edu/martin-center/venue-rental/default.php)
- ▶ The James and Nellie Brinkley Center (formerly known as the Millennium Center) Contact the Space Management Coordinator  
[etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/contactus.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/contactus.php)
- ▶ The Reece Museum  
[etsu.edu/cas/cass/reece/venue.php](https://etsu.edu/cas/cass/reece/venue.php)
- ▶ The Sherrod Library - Quillen Conference Room  
<https://libraries.etsu.edu/spaces/quillen>
- ▶ The ETSU Innovation Lab  
[etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/venue](https://etsu.edu/facilities/rent-space/venue)
- ▶ Charles C.Sherrod Library, room 309, for smaller spaces.  
<https://libraries.etsu.edu/spaces/sherrod309>

## FACILITIES, PARKING & SAFETY

- ▶ To reserve parking for guests on the main campus, complete a space utilization form at [etsu.edu/facilities/documents/policy-200.1-space\\_utilization\\_form\\_rev5.15.23-2.pdf](https://etsu.edu/facilities/documents/policy-200.1-space_utilization_form_rev5.15.23-2.pdf) and send to [spacerequest@etsu.edu](mailto:spacerequest@etsu.edu)
- ▶ Public Safety [etsu.edu/dps/](https://etsu.edu/dps/)
- ▶ Facilities Management [etsu.edu/facilities/](https://etsu.edu/facilities/)
- ▶ Facilities Services [etsu.edu/facilities/operations/default.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/operations/default.php).
- ▶ For work orders go to [etsu.edu/facilities/services.php](https://etsu.edu/facilities/services.php).
  - Provide explicit directions, including time, date, location, and contact.
  - Be prepared to provide an index number to cover any costs related to your request.

## UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- ▶ Find your Partnership Manager (PM)  
<https://www.etsu.edu/umc/partnership-manager.php>
- ▶ ETSU Brand Guide  
<https://www.etsu.edu/brand/>
- ▶ ETSU Design Templates and digital design platform - Marq  
[marq.com/documents#/dashboard](https://marq.com/documents#/dashboard)
- ▶ PowerPoint Template  
<https://etsuur.app.box.com/file/1009014007590?s=rj8kr3j5ovpcv3gsvhk7wbkw14s9ha6e>
- ▶ Branded PowerPoint Template  
<https://etsuur.app.box.com/file/1147495965674?s=sooquzqk64vtd8uv9svhlye1rxk6j6ek>
- ▶ For services outside of what UMC can provide contact BMC Creative <https://bmccreative.org/>

## **SPEAKERS AND GUESTS**

- ▶ To request the ETSU President to speak at your event, visit [etsu.edu/president/request\\_forms/](https://etsu.edu/president/request_forms/)
- ▶ For elected officials please contact the Office of Community, and Government Relations <https://www.etsu.edu/president/governmentrelations/staff.php>
- ▶ For the ETSU Board of Trustees, contact the ETSU Chief of Staff <https://www.etsu.edu/president/contactus.php>
- ▶ Please contact Advancement staff when inviting donors: [etsu.edu/advancement/contactus.php](https://etsu.edu/advancement/contactus.php)
- ▶ For the ETSU Foundation Board of Directors, please contact the Vice President of Advancement. [etsu.edu/advancement/contactus.php](https://etsu.edu/advancement/contactus.php)
- ▶ For the Alumni Board of Directors, please contact the Executive Director for the ETSU National Alumni Association <https://www.etsualumni.org/s/974/bp18/interior.aspx?sid=974&gid=1&pgid=1698>

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE**

- ▶ University Food Service Vendor <https://etsu.catertrax.com/>
- ▶ ETSU Campus Alcohol Policy [etsu.edu/policies/facilities-operations/alcohol.php](https://etsu.edu/policies/facilities-operations/alcohol.php)

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

- ▶ Inclusive language guide [etsu.edu/brand/inclusion\\_and\\_belonging.php#community](https://etsu.edu/brand/inclusion_and_belonging.php#community)
- ▶ Request an ASL interpreter from Disability Services. [etsu.edu/president/request\\_forms/](https://etsu.edu/president/request_forms/)
- ▶ For more information about accessible parking locations, please go to the ETSU accessibility map. <https://arcg.is/1m41C90>

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

- ▶ IT Support Services for Events <https://www.etsu.edu/its/services/media-events.php>

## **ETSU EVENTS**

1320 W. State of Franklin | P.O. Box 70706  
Johnson City, TN 37614  
423-439-8587