Wisconsin Union

Social Education Area

Diversity, Inclusion, Social Justice and Belonging (DISJB)

Event Planning Checklist

**This event planning checklist is meant to serve as a resource for Wisconsin Union student volunteers and advising staff. The checklist contains tools identify opportunities and address unique challenges as it relates to planning diverse, inclusive, socially just events. Wisconsin Union Social Education events range in size, from intimate workshops and discussions to large scale concerts and performances. Our programmers can be enthusiastic first year students, grad students, seasoned staff, or anyone in between. This checklist provides guidelines to instill a sense of belonging within our community by making all events as inclusive and interculturally competent as possible.**

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[**UW Madison Student Affairs Social Justice Commitment**](https://students.wisc.edu/who-we-are/strategic-plan/)

UW Madison Student Affairs is committed to infusing diversity, inclusion, and social justice into all aspects of the division. This includes increasing the number of students who feel a positive sense of belonging (valued involvement and fit) and improving intercultural competence (awareness, knowledge, & skills) among students & Student Affairs staff.

**What is Intercultural competence?**

Intercultural competence are the behaviors of individuals and our area’s policies that come together to allow individuals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. It promotes respect and understanding of diverse cultures and social groups, and an appreciation of everyone’s unique attributes. It includes the ability and the will to respond to the unique needs of an individual that arise from the individual’s culture, and the ability to use the person’s culture as a resource or tool to assist in interventions to help meet the person’s needs.

**How to Modify this Document**

We recognize that specific issues may arise outside of these guidelines and consider this tool a living document. Suggestions for improving this document can be sent to XXX@lists.wisc.edu

# 01 Before the Event

* **Reflection**
* Consider if there is a need for diversity training or topical training for your coordination team, your committee, or yourself. If training and awareness building is needed, work with your advisor to create a plan.
* Review your plans for your total program and ensure your commitment to inclusion is reflected throughout your program. For example, do not recruit BIPOC speakers to speak on diversity alone. Instead, recruit BIPOC speakers to talk about leadership, innovation, event technology, or other insightful topics.
* **Establish an Event Coordination Team**

As part of the pre-event thought processes, include diverse perspectives in your brainstorming sessions. This many include doing research and outreach to other institutions, Registered Student Organizations, student leaders, campus partners and departments.

* **Working with Campus Partners**
* Consider connecting with other offices and integrating into existing events and programs to maximize attendance.
* When partnering with historically underserved groups, include your advisor in all communication and plans so they can help identify possible microaggressions, missteps, and miscommunications with the goal of avoiding these recurring problems.
* Explore your campus partners’ priorities, past and future programs, preferred planning timeline, concerns, and goals for both the event and the partnership.
* Prioritize timely communication with campus partners.
* Do not make promises that cannot be kept.
* Take the time to fully document all agreements and group responsibilities and confirm the accuracy of this document with campus partners.
* Follow through and honor all commitments made. Remember, it may feel like a one-time partnership, organizationally we would like to maintain a long-term positive connection with our campus partners.
* **Speaker/Presenter/Performer Sources and Selection**

Ensure proper time is give not researching and sources representative speakers, presenters, performers, etc. that will advance your program goals in addition to your DISJB goals and values.

* **Establish a clear purpose and target audience for the event**

Establish main priorities/goals for the event with the coordinator team and decide upon key target audience groups.

* **Land Acknowledgements**

If you are considering whether to include a land acknowledgement at this event, review:

[Land Acknowledgement Guidance](https://tribalrelations.wisc.edu/resources/land-acknowledgement-guidance/)

* **Establish an event budget.**

Ensure your budget factors in costs including accessibility accommodation and inclusive catering options (more details on both considerations to follow).

* [**Familiarize yourself with the Inclusive Communications Guide**](https://uc.wisc.edu/inclusive-communications-guide/)

Use gender-inclusive language. [Understand pronouns matter](https://lgbt.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/GSCC-Pronoun-guide.pdf).

* **Considerations, as appropriate or needed:**
* Use of pronoun stickers
* Structured opportunities for people to chat (pairs, small groups) to make it easier for introverts to participate.
* No all-male panels
* No panels without racial/ethnic diversity
* Scholarships or financial assistance for participants

# 02 Invitations to Talent (i.e. Moderators, speakers, presenters, performers, etc.)

* **Talent/Speaker Invitation**

As part of the formal invitation, specifically include language on DISJB issues you would like to address as part of the program and/or to affirm the organizational values.

* **Talent/Speaker Demographic Tracking**

Once the “talent” has accepted your invitation to speak, please request relevant demographic information for tracking purposes (gender pronounces/race, etc.) Some guidance for requesting this information is as follows:

You can specifically state:

‘“As part of our ongoing efforts to build a more inclusive environment, all individuals are being asked to provide us with demographic information, to the extent they feel comfortable sharing that with us. This includes gender pronouns, race, or ethnicity, etc. Please know that this information is voluntarily being collected to better track our DISJB efforts and is not a mandatory requirement for participation in an event.”

* **Ask About Needs**

Inquire if there are cultural traditions, needs, or personal accommodations we can meet to ensure the visit is respectful, welcoming, and comfortable for the guest.

# 03 Date, Venue Selection, and Catering

* **Strive to avoid religious and cultural days of observances.**
* **Secure event venues that cater to accessibility needs, for instance, elevator access, ADA restrooms, accessible entrances (without stairs/ steps), ramps, wheelchair/low vision/low hearing seating, clear and legible signs, etc.**

[Guide to Planning an Accessible Event](https://compliance.wisc.edu/documents/guide-to-planning-an-accessible-event/)

* **Ensure that venue has all-gendered restrooms or is open to designating specific restrooms as gender neutral.**
* **Ensure that venue has the option to set up designated rooms as needed and when applicable – lactation room, meditation rooms, etc.**

[**Navigating Restrooms at UW Madison**](https://lgbt.wisc.edu/support/navigate-campus/)

[**Gender-Neutral Restrooms**](https://lgbt.wisc.edu/documents/uw-madison-gender-neutral-restrooms/)

* **If refreshments are part of the event, consider:**
* Food options that appeal to a range of dietary needs (mainly vegetarian, with vegan and gluten-free options)
* Food options that respect religious/cultural diets
* Clearly indicate allergens and gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, or other options.

WI Union Multicultural Food Policy (Need Link)

# 04 Event Promotion and Registration

* **Ensure event promotion language and visuals are inclusive for target audiences.** Please see this example for a guide to inclusive language and utilize your event coordination team to review promotional copy:

[See the Guide for Inclusive Language](https://editorial-styleguide.umark.wisc.edu/inclusive-language/)

* **Flyers and other materials, if distributed electronically, should be screen-reader compatible, with an accompanying text-only version in the body of the email.**
* **When applicable, include questions about accessibility and dietary needs in registration form.**

Sample language:

“We strive to host inclusive, accessible events that all individuals, including individuals with disabilities, can engage in fully. To request an accommodation or for inquiries about accessibility, please contact: XZY”

Question examples include:

* Open ended: Please let us know of any accessibility needs.
* Multiple choice: Do you have any known dietary restrictions that we should be aware of? Options: Kosher, Halal, vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, other.

[Coordinating CART Services](https://mcburney.wisc.edu/interpreting-captioning-requests/)

* **When applicable, ensure that registration form includes option to enter gender pronouns with the option to print pronouns on attendee nametags.**
* **Be explicit with the intent of an event or your goals/values, for example, is the event or the venue advertised as LGBTQIA+ Friendly?**
* **Include parking and bus line information, as appropriate**

# 05 Event Host Preparation

* **Prepare Event Host (s) with panelist identification information and DISJB-related questions.**

Pronoun, phonetic spelling, or identification-related information for each individual event host will be referring to consistently. Ensure event host is comfortable with this information.

* **When applicable, re-plan how event host (s) would prefer to solicit questions/feedback from audience to ensure that many perspectives are included. Some options include:**
* Two open mics where audience members can line up with questions.
* Pre-submitted questions as part of registration form
* Real-time questions submitted via apps such as Poll Everywhere or social media.
* **Ensure that Event Host moderator is prepared to handle sometimes sensitive subjects** (related to race, gender, orientation, ability, etc.) that may arise as part of the event. Talk through specific processes to make sure the conversation educational and respectful.
* **As appropriate, have a plan to set ground rules at the start of the conversation:**

Purpose of conversation is to provide an educational and safe context in which to discuss these sensitive issues. We ask all audience members to be respectful of differing opinions and ask all participants to actively listen to ensure an open dialogue.

* Encourage the use of “I” statements when speaking from individual experience:
* When applicable, offer to keep the conversation “off the record” or apply strategies to keep confidentiality so all parties feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues.
* Empower the moderator to stay in control of the discussion i.e., if an audience member proves to be disrespectful, they can kindly let them know they are disrespecting stated ground rules and will not be able to participate if they continue with behavior.
* **Always provide back-up assistance as event coordinator to moderator.**
* **If present, Event Host (s) should be prepared to introduce ASL interpreter (s) and CART providers (s), rather than having these professional introduce themselves.**

# Final Pre-Event Considerations and Resources

* **Communicate Event Goals and Expectations to Facilities and Building Manager**

Work with facilities staff, building managers, and security, as needed to share event plans, timing, and goals. Specifically share expectations for a welcoming, collaborative approach to event management and problem solving.

* **Accessibility Needs: When needed, provide sign language services, or offer assistive learning devices (ALD) or closed captions if audience members request services. Reconfirm physical access and elevator function with venue.**
* **Designate Responsibility**

At events with requested accommodations, designate someone to be responsible for accommodations as well as to help with seating, ensure captioning and other tech is working, maintain clear pathways, and other needs.

* **Reserve Seating**

When designing your event space, reserve seating at the front of the room for people who lip-read, are hard of hearing, and who use electronic hearing aids. People who use sign language interpreters will also need space to sit at the front of the room.

* **Food Labeling:** Clearly label any buffet-style meals, .e.g. Kosher, Halal, vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, and gluten-free and allergens.
* **Pre-event Communication**

Provide all guests with a guided map to note accessibility entrances/exits for the venue

# 07 During the Event

* **At Registration**

Make sure check-in tables, signs and materials are easily accessible and readable to attendees with disabilities.

* **Post signage at registration table if any portion of the event is being recorded.**
* **Q & A**

Where applicable, make sure to repeat questions posted by audience before responding. Presenters or audience members may express confidence that they are loud enough and do not need a microphone. Regardless, ask them to speak into one.

* **During the program, have designated reserved seating available for anyone who that who may need it or request it day-of, being mindful of space and ease of accessibility for those in need (pregnant attendees, attendees with disabilities, older adults, etc.).**
* **Care of Talent/Presenters/Speakers**

While we are often paying for the services of the presenter, they are still a guest of our program and of our institution. As such, you should make every effort to ensure they are treated well and have a positive experience. This includes, as appropriate, ensuring they are assigned a host to help them navigate the space and the program, they receive reasonable hospitality amenities (from water to a meal to a dressing room). As a guest, they should be escorted as needed, thanked for their services, and communicated appropriately before, during and at the conclusion of the event.

# 08 After the Event

* **Send a post-event survey that asks about inclusion and accessibility at the event. Post-event survey sample questions examples include:**
* “The event included a diversity of thought.”
* “The event performers, speakers, moderators, etc. were representative and diverse.”
* When applicable: “The event expanded my thinking about DISJB-related topics.”
* When applicable: “My accessibility needs were met during the event.”
* **Send thank you notes to panelists/keynote/lecturers.**
* If they incorporated DISJ in a specific way, thank them for being candid and open with their responses that helped set the tone for the conversation.
* Solicit suggestions for future speakers and panel content topics to include in the conversation.
* **Working with Campus Partners**
* Follow up in a timely manner on payment transfers, etc. Do not keep campus partners waiting for reimbursements or wrapping up event logistics.
* Debrief the event and share perspectives on successes and areas for improvement.
* Express gratitude to campus partners and explore opportunities for future partnerships.