

## **Planning A University-Wide Event**

### **Helpful Hints From the Office of Event Management**

“Amazing!”

“You could see they really worked hard and it paid off!”

These and other positive remarks were written on a comment board in the Student Center Atrium the day following the “Day of Dialogue,” also titled USA and the World in the Bush Era: A Day of Dialogue, Debate and Discussion) at Hofstra on March 10, 2004.

The University-wide event coordinated by faculty and students consisted of 18 sessions that were designed to promote debate, discussion and understanding of the policies and actions of the U.S. government’s role under the leadership of President George W. Bush. Both faculty members and students were encouraged by the high level of active participation and believe that the format and organization of the event were instrumental in its success.

“The event gave students and all of the participants an opportunity to form their ideas more clearly. Students gained the confidence to speak. Everyone felt a sense of responsibility for doing what was necessary to make it a success,” says Professor Greg Maney, Associate Professor of Sociology and one of the organizers of the event. Beth Pumo of the student originating group, Students Against Injustice (SAI), explained, “It was our goal to make the presentation of ideas as non-partisan as possible and to reach out to many people on both sides of the issues.”

Using this event as a model for others that hope to draw different sectors of the campus community together, it is important to point out several factors that contributed to this day’s success:

**Communication:** Sessions were planned by groups of volunteers with expertise or interest in the subject matter. They met frequently to decide on panels and speakers that would report balanced information. Criteria and specific instructions were developed for the session moderators. The group noted that interaction among departments, decentralized control and use of e-mail allowed maximum input and content.

**Publicity:** Promotion of the event took place over a relatively short period of time, with students and faculty using classroom announcements and discussions, resources offered by the Office of Student Activities (mailboxes, voicemail announcements, flyers). The event also had a dedicated e-mail address (dialogue@hofstra.edu). To view PDF versions of these promotional materials, go to the Meeting Planner Resources on the Hofstra Office of Event Management Web site at [www.hofstra.edu/oem](http://www.hofstra.edu/oem).

The Office of University Relations coordinated a series of announcements including ads that ran in The Chronicle; a press release that was sent to the local media, including student media; postings on the Hofstra Web site and Hofstra Information Channel; and a listing in the weekly “Hofstra Headlines” e-newsletter. Publications department also provided valuable assistance with listings in the “It’s Happening at Hofstra” newsletter and worked closely with conference organizers on the printing of flyers and a program of the day’s events.

Encouraging faculty and student participation: According to Cindy Bogard, Associate Professor of Sociology, faculty members and students were given the freedom to organize panels on the political areas that most intrigued them. “They were put into groups and matched with peers or colleagues who shared the same interests. We met with them weekly three times to get progress reports.” SAI, a student organization with a vested interest in the political nature of the event was brought in as a partner in the planning. Beth Puma explained, “ If a lot of people work together and you assign responsibilities you can make change.” The best measure of student enthusiasm? SAI registered approximately 200 student voters during the “Day of Dialogue.”

Administrative support: Planners agreed that reaching out to other offices and departments, such as the Office of the Provost, Event Management, University Relations and Public Safety, was extremely important. “When we had a problem it was solved,” says Professor Maney. “The support of leaders and authorities for the event helped facilitate cooperation among the groups. We had encouragement from all levels so that people could come together. The funding and support that we had from the Provost’s Office was phenomenal! We were able to facilitate inter-group cooperation because campus leaders and authorities supported us.”

We look forward to your comments and questions. Please e-mail us at [fmoksd@hofstra.edu](mailto:fmoksd@hofstra.edu) or contact Kathleen Dwyer at x3-4067. For more information about events at Hofstra call x3-6631 or visit our Web site and access the Eye on Events e-newsletter at [www.hofstra.edu/oem](http://www.hofstra.edu/oem).

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