

## Event Planning Policy

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Department Heads  
**FROM:** Janet Horan  
**DATE:** September 2014  
**RE:** **Updated** Event Planning Policies

The following are the revised policies for event planning which were originally established in September 2009. These policies continue to provide a standard framework to ensure that budget management practices are fully understood, implemented, and followed. Included with the policies is a Statement of Principles against which all School events will be measured to determine viability.

The policies are broken down into several categories:

- Overall: policies that all events must comply with;
- Departmental Events: meetings, personal milestones, welcome lunches, etc.;
- Center and Program Conferences and Symposia;
- School-Sponsored Events for Students or Executive Education and;
- Catering Spending Limits for Various Event Levels.

### **Section 1: Event Planning Policies**

#### **Overall**

- All events must comply with the Columbia Business School Statement of Principles for Events:  
*We are stewards of our students' tuition and our donors' gifts. This stewardship requires us to use discretion in the planning and execution of events. Events must be in support of our core priorities to create thought leadership and enhance the student experience. Events must demonstrate conservation, collaboration, and sustainability.*
- With limited exceptions - no hard alcohol may be served or consumed at School-sponsored events. The only exceptions are: Annual Dinner, International Reunions, Reunion Weekend.
- Tax exemption should be used for all expenditures where possible.
- Events and meetings should be scheduled during non-meal time hours.

- Any events occurring in an employee’s home require pre-approval by the Senior Vice Dean or the Vice Dean for Finance and Administration. Events that occur without advance approval are not reimbursable.

### **Departmental Events**

- Meetings: Catering at the “basic” level\* may be ordered if scheduling does not allow a meeting to take place during non-meal time hours.
- Personal Milestones: Birthday, shower, or other similar celebrations are not reimbursable.
- Welcome Lunches: A manager may take a new team member to lunch and charge it to their department budget. The team’s budget will cover the cost of the lunch as a “medium” event\*. If additional team members participate in the lunch, each will have to cover his/her own expenses.
- Farewell Celebrations:
  - Individuals Employed Less than Three Years: A one-on-one farewell lunch for the departing employee may be arranged with, and at the discretion of, the immediate manager as a “medium” event\*. The department’s budget will cover the cost of the lunch. If additional team members participate in the lunch, each will have to cover his/her own expenses.
  - Individuals Employed Three to Five Years: An offsite team lunch or other on-campus farewell sendoff with the entire department may be hosted as a “medium” event\* at the discretion of the immediate manager. The department’s budget will cover the cost of the team lunch or department-wide event.
  - Individuals Employed More than Five Years: A farewell sendoff may be arranged with the departing employee’s entire department as a “medium” event\* and can be optionally held at an offsite location after work hours. Beer and/or wine may be served and reimbursed. In some cases, approval may be granted to permit such an event to include the entire School community. The department head will determine the location based on the time of the year and other staff-wide considerations.

*\*See Tables I-IV (Summary of Event Guidelines) and V (Expanded Event Guidelines) for event level definitions, audience, spending limits, and menu details.*

- Annual Departmental Event: In addition to the allowable events listed above, each department may host one School-sponsored catered event per year (for example, a summer picnic or a holiday celebration). Cost per person inclusive of all charges (food and beverage) may not exceed \$35 per person (before tax and tip).

### **Center and Program Conferences and Symposia**

- Given that Centers and Programs generally have endowment funding available to them, public events need not recover all costs via ticket sales and sponsorship. However, cost-recovery should be a goal whenever possible.

### **School-Sponsored Events for Students or Executive Education (CSEP)**

- Alcohol (beer and wine only) service for student events where alcohol is not normally permitted, including *recruiting events* hosted by an outside sponsor, must be approved in advance by the Vice Dean for Degree programs or Senior Associate Dean for Degree Programs.
- Alcohol service for Executive Education events must be approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Executive Education.
- Alcohol service without advance approval is not reimbursable.
- No alcohol may be served at academic events (i.e., elective presentations, case competitions, PSI events).
- Advance approvals must be sought for any special requests.

### **Catering Spending Limits for Various Event Levels**

Listed below is Business School spending limits for events by type. These limits are based on and adhere to University policies and reflect typical School spending in the past year. Amounts in excess of these limits are not reimbursable. Tax-exempt certificates should be used wherever practical.

For catered events, the limits below include food, beverages, and alcohol (beer and wine only). The limits exclude service, delivery fees, labor/wait staff, china, furniture rentals, linens, flowers, audiovisual equipment for presentations, and room rental fees. The Vice Dean for Finance and Administration will review these spending levels annually to ensure conformity to University policies and adjust for inflation.

When submitting any documentation please include any ticket or event fees that will be collected as an offset to the total event price.

<b>Table I. Event Guidelines At A Glance (Low Library/Lerner Hall)</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>			
Food limit per person	\$20	\$25	\$35
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Lunch</b>			
Food limit per person	\$32	\$40	\$90
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Dinner</b>			
Food limit per person	\$40	\$50	\$100*
Alcohol Allowed		✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Reception (after 4pm for 2 hours)</b>			
Food limit per person	\$54	\$75	\$90
Alcohol Allowed	✓	✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓

<b>Table II. Event Guidelines At A Glance (Casa Italiana, Sterling Catering)</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>			
Food limit per person	\$20	\$25	\$50
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Lunch</b>			
Food limit per person	\$28	\$45	\$70
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓

<b>Dinner</b>			
Food limit per person	\$40	\$72	\$100*
Alcohol Allowed		✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Reception (after 4pm for 2 hours)</b>			
Food limit per person	\$40	\$45	\$90
Alcohol Allowed	✓	✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓

<b>Table III. Event Guidelines At A Glance (Faculty House)</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Breakfast</b>			
Food limit per person	\$27	\$40	\$55
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Lunch</b>			
Food limit per person	\$31	\$53	\$90
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Dinner</b>			
Food limit per person	\$53	\$70	\$100*
Alcohol Allowed		✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Reception (after 4pm for 2 hours)</b>			
Food limit per person	\$55	\$75	\$100
Alcohol Allowed	✓	✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Table IV. Event Guidelines At A Glance (Uris, Warren, and outside Columbia University)</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>

<b>Breakfast</b>			
Food limit per person	\$20	\$25	\$50
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Lunch</b>			
Food limit per person	\$25	\$35	\$90
Alcohol Allowed			
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Dinner</b>			
Food limit per person	\$40	\$50	\$100
Alcohol Allowed		✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓
<b>Reception (after 4pm)</b>			
Food limit per person	\$35	\$45	\$85
Alcohol Allowed	✓	✓	✓
Flowers Allowed		✓	✓

**Table V. Expanded Event Guidelines**

Basic		
Definition	Audience	Sample Menu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less formal gatherings or small group meetings held on campus or at an off-campus venue (Restaurant, office, etc)</li> <li>• Examples: Town Hall, career breakfasts, advisory boards, panels for prospective students, EMBA NY class days, elective fairs, trainings, focus groups, webinars, happy hours, opening/closing meetings, peer advisor or Hermes events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Faculty</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Alumni</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continental: Pastries, bagels, yogurt, fruit plate, hard boiled eggs, coffee, tea, juice, water</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pizza, sandwich platter, boxed lunches, cold buffet, cookies, fruit, delivery (Maoz, Che Bella, Chinese)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as Lunch</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheese, fruit, veggies, cookie platter, beer/wine (at happy hour or opening/closing), cheese, fruit, antipasto.</li> <li>• Platters, not passed hors d'oeuvres.</li> </ul>
Medium		
Definition	Audience	Sample Menu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger events</li> <li>• Held on and off campus.</li> <li>• Catering typically provided by restaurant around campus</li> <li>• Exceptions to spending limits will be made for spaces managed by UEM and Italian Academy</li> <li>• Examples: Admitted student workshops, affinity group events, Executive Education events, boards (PSE, etc), EMBA lunch, faculty dinners, recruiter events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Faculty</li> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Alumni</li> <li>• Outside Individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic + scrambled eggs, hash browns, French toast, pancakes, bacon, sausage, oatmeal bar.</li> <li>• Wait staff used just for set-up.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic + hot items; fancy/gourmet sandwiches.</li> <li>• Typically buffet style; includes coffee, tea, soda, and water.</li> <li>• Wait staff used just for set-up.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic + multiple stations (vegetarian, carving, sushi), assorted drinks, wine/beer.</li> <li>• Labor may include a captain, chef, wait staff, and/or bartender.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic + hot and cold passed and stationary hors</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d'oeuvres; wine and beer.</li> <li>• May also include coffee/tea.</li> </ul>
<b>High*</b>		
<b>Definition</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Sample Menu</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require prior approval from the Senior Vice Dean or Vice Dean for Finance and Administration</li> <li>• Reimbursable at medium level only without prior approval</li> <li>• Examples: Annual Dinner, Reunion, Reunion Kick Off, Hermes Reception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donors</li> <li>• BOO members</li> <li>• Advisory Boards</li> <li>• VIP Speakers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium + omelet station, smoothie station, waffle station.</li> <li>• China, cloth napkins, silverware, glassware.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium + may be plated with china, cloth napkins, silverware, glassware.</li> <li>• Faculty House and Italian Academy.</li> <li>• On rare occasions, alcohol allowed.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buffet or Plated.</li> <li>• Includes captain, chef, wait staff, and/or bartender, with china, cloth napkins, silverware, and glassware.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot and cold passed and stationary hors d'oeuvres; wine and beer.</li> <li>• Stations may be of higher quality, more variety, and chef-attended</li> <li>• Includes coffee and tea service.</li> </ul>

\*For High-Level Events, the October 2006 University policy on “Business meals hosted by CU involving external parties” applies:

*Except under rare circumstances, these meals should not exceed \$100 per person, excluding tips and tax. Any meal costs in excess of the per meal threshold (by no more than 50%) require Supplemental Approval. All policy exceptions not listed as eligible for Supplemental Approval, or any requests for exception of amounts that exceed the thresholds allowable for Supplemental Approval, still require a formal written exception request approved by a Senior Departmental Officer for documentation and evaluation by Accounts Payable. In all cases, the amount above the threshold must be segregated to natural account 66425.*



Event-Related Natural Accounts  
May 6, 2014

66414 Alcohol: Staff & Faculty  
66412 Alcohol: Students and Participants  
62160 AV  
61470 Books & Reports  
66140 Branded Gifts  
64360 Complete Meeting Package: Staff and Faculty  
64355 Complete Meeting Package: Students & Participants  
62025 Copying including Print Services  
66400 Entertainment  
66430 Flowers  
61690 Food: Staff & Faculty  
61692 Food: Students & Participants  
65232 Lodging: Staff & Faculty  
65231 Lodging: Students & Participants  
64305 Photography  
63005 Rentals, e.g. chairs, tables, etc.  
64345 Service, e.g. wait staff  
63475 Postage (Shipping)  
61405 Supplies, e.g. pens, highlighters, name tents, name badges, etc.  
65305 International Travel  
65205 Domestic Travel-Travel within the U.S.  
63005 General Facilities (Venue)