



Preparedness & Security

Event Management

Updated January 2007

Summary: Concerts, lectures, dinners, meetings, rallies, fundraisers, and dignitary visits such as the Dalai Lama and the former US Attorney General Janet Reno are examples of events held on campus. There is the annual Dragon Day Parade, a gathering of thousands of students on campus. It is a day when architectural students build a large dragon, parade it through campus, and then burn it in an open area. Many of these events present potential risks to the Cornell University community and a management challenge for campus administrators. In response to these significant events, Cornell developed a web based on-line event planning and risk management system to handle many of the events on campus. It is managed by the Student Activities Office, but has input from administrative departments such as Environmental Health and Safety, Cornell University Police, and Risk Management and Insurance. The full list of departments involved is listed below in "Participants". Events not managed under this centralized system receive similar consideration by other independent University planning committees are commencement, sporting events, certain concerts, Dragon Day, and Slope day.



Campus Profile

Cornell University

Ithaca, New York

UG Students: 13,678

Graduate Students: 5,884

Faculty and Staff: 9,400

Campus Area: 745 acres

Operating Budget: 1.2 billion

Events Registered:

- Prior to 1998 = approx. 400 a year
- 2000-2001 = 1,686
- 2001-2002 = 1,832

Student Organizations: 580

With large concentrations of people in any major area, the increased risk of harm to people and/or the environment due to fire, weather, medical issues, security threats, or other disasters is evident. This events management system allows the University to plan for an event, to look at the potential hazards, to mitigate the risks, and then to prepare.



Project Goals

- Prepare for events appropriately to minimize or eliminate risks.
- Enhance communication between event planners and University officials.
- Develop an electronic system to reduce paperwork and expedite event review and approval.
- Provide Campus Administrators and first responders full access to the registered event database.

Description of Issue/Problem

Events, both large and small, brought a wide variety of issues – discord with local community, potential liability, safety, insurance, and security concerns. Managing these events manually on a large campus was a serious challenge. A more integrated system was needed to manage all of the University's concerns.

U.S. EPA New England Best Management Practices Catalog for Colleges and Universities.

For more information about the catalog and other case studies visit

<http://www.epa.gov/region1/assistance/univ/bmpcatalog.html>

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Pre-Project Considerations

- Determine if your campus has the ability to input data on-line and the technical expertise to assist the department managing the database.
- Dedicate staff time to focus attention on event review, approval, and on-site management.
- Find the support of top level administrators to dedicate an administrative review team to event management.

Steps Taken:

Developing the System:

1. Established a committee of departmental administrators to review and approve events. Standing committees representing other departments are used for certain special events, as needed.
2. Developed event criteria in order to evaluate events that were determined by event approvers representing various departments on campus.
3. Created an on-line form, the database, and database fields based largely on the original paper form.
4. Worked with the technology group on campus to develop and implement the electronic system.
5. Sent out communications to all student groups and departments on the new procedures for event registration and approval.



Events to Register

Required to register two weeks prior to event:

1. Departmental events that serve alcohol, and
2. Student groups are required to register all events meeting these criteria:
 - Events with food
 - Inside events that hold over 200 people
 - Events with alcohol
 - Admission charged or something sold
 - Fundraisers
3. Departmental events not related to normal class activities are also encouraged to register.
4. Spontaneous events are allowed, but last minute registration and notification of the event is strongly recommended.

Key Criteria

- Location, Date, and Time
- Number of People Expected
- Potential Liabilities
- Fire Safety
- Food Safety
- Presence of Alcohol
- History of the Event
- Type of Event
- Tone of the Event
- Contractor Involvement
- Use of Utilities
- General Safety Hazards
- Experience of Event Organizers
- Transportation, Parking and Traffic
- Emergency Access
- Insurance Requirements
- Indoor vs. Outdoor Events
- Setup and Staging
- Items Sold or Distributed

The Results

Safe Events

Alerting Administrators to potential issues and addressing:

- Security Needs
- Crowd Control
- Safe & compliant set-up and staging
- Suitable routes for marches or parades
- Caterer compliance with health and safety regulations
- Transportation Management
- Emergency Medical Needs
- Sanitary Facilities
- Obtaining the necessary permits (i.e., for bonfires)
- Events over 5,000 people requiring Emergency Management Plans (EH&S, Police, and Transportation work with event organizers to develop)
- Joint command posts for large scale events
- Notification to local police and fire departments as necessary.

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How it Works:

1. Event Planner (EP) connects to the “Use of University Property” web site and enters in appropriate information.
2. Student Activities Office (SAO) staff reviews UUP Form and selects Event Approvers (EA) from a pre-determined list.
3. EAs receive e-mail notification of new events for approval.
4. EA logs onto web site, reviews the UUP Form, and checks safety and risk concerns pertinent to their area of expertise. Approvers have 3 options:
 - o Yes - event is approved
 - o No - event is not approved
 - o Pending - event is not yet approved because additional information or changes are needed
5. EA includes comments as necessary to ensure compliance. EA will work with EPs to ensure all necessary obligations are met (i.e., burning permits).
6. Approval status & comments are e-mailed to event organizer. Few events are not ultimately approved.
7. EP replies via e-mail or phone call to discuss and resolve any issues.
8. EH&S and CU Police fill out “After Action Reports” for each event that is staffed.

Several administrative departments at Cornell play important roles in event management (see section on Participants). Here is an example of the involvement of two departments.

Cornell’s EH&S Office performs the following:

- The EH&S Event Management Coordinator handles minor setup issues, reviews room occupancy numbers, and other safety related issues.
- Major setup and code related issues are sent to the EH&S Safety Program.
- Event Management Coordinator arranges EH&S staffing.
- Emergency Services Team is provided summary forms prior to the event.
- Safety Engineer conducts site review of major events.

Cornell’s Police Department performs the following:

- For “recognizable” speakers, a Risk Assessment is performed by the Investigative Unit and other law enforcement agencies as needed.
- Depending upon the speaker at an event, the Police might coordinate security activities with the Secret Service, the State Department, the FBI, and/or local law enforcement.
- Police recommend an appropriate level of security for an event to the event planners.
- Post all events within departments so officers are aware of events and their pertinent details during their shift.
- Details are provided at events when deemed necessary. This can include both uniformed and plain clothes officers.
- Surveillance and detection equipment are used on an as needed basis.
- Determine necessary crowd & traffic control measures.

Event Approvers...

University administrators trained in their fields of expertise who use their skills to review and approve events.

Examples of EAs are:

- Student Activities Office
- Cornell University Police
- Environmental Health & Safety
- Risk Management & Insurance
- Transportation Services
- Community Relations
- Others as needed.

See Participants for a full list of EAs.

Cornell University Police Department

- Have training from the Dignitary Protection School provided by the Secret Service.
- Have a mutual aid agreement with local police.
- Is recognized as a Law Enforcement Agency.

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System Description and Tools Used

The current on-line system uses three main programs:

- The internet,
- Database software, and
- An email program.

These three programs are required to manage the event system; however, the event planner and event approvers only need access to the internet and an email account.

Participants

Event Management Planning Team - meets weekly as needed:

- Student Activities Office (Administers the program)
- Cornell University Police
- Environmental Health & Safety
- Risk Management & Insurance
- Transportation Services
- Community Relations
- Information & Referral Center
- Athletics

Additional members - involved as needed:

- Cornell Dining
- Campus Life
- Grounds Department
- Planning, Design & Construction - Shops
- Utilities Department
- Building Coordinators
- Others departments on campus

Ithaca Fire Department, as needed.

Ambulance Company, as needed, on day of the event.



Performance and Benefits

- The goals of the program were met. They include a university wide team approach to event management on campus.
- Increased and comprehensive data for campus administrators to share and base-line event planning decision-making.
- Safer and more successful campus events.
- In 1999, two years after the system was operational, a 30 percent increase in advanced registration was seen.
- Cost savings observed in printing and in distribution of the original three page document.
- The entire approval process can be completed in one day.
- Satisfied response agencies because issues are corrected prior to events thereby reducing risks.
- Increased coverage under the University's Club Insurance Policy.
- Additional resources for students and departments organizing events on campus.

Financial Information

The Student Activities Office began partially funding the project in January 1997. With the assistance of Allen Bova, Director of Risk Management and Insurance at Cornell University, external funding was obtained through a grant from United Educators Insurance Risk Retention Group, Inc.

Version 1.0 was developed by Joshua Hecht, with the help of Ian McLeod '98, Alex Lauren '98, and Joseph Scaffido (Assistant Director of Student Activities).

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Lessons Learned

- Develop a team effort and get all interested parties involved. This is the key to a successful system.
- Obtain the support of your school's administration and student government.
- Find out about events on campus by:
 - Requiring student organizations to register events
 - Reviewing University calendars and reports from departments or groups
 - Contacting the Dean of Students, Student Activities Office
 - Watching for ads and posters placed around campus
- Take a pro-active planning approach. Managing issues during an event is typically too late.
- Steer organizers in the right direction and help them develop realistic plans & expectations. Most event organizers are novices and need assistance.
- Uncontrolled events on your campus represent a liability.
- Involve your insurance department.
- Don't underestimate the work involved in setting up events.
- Be prepared to deal with event related issues - ones you never knew could occur – like drinking water, sanitation, potential riots, etc.
- Don't expect all events will be registered or all the details to be revealed as required.
- Discourage event registration too far in advance because they often lack many required details.

Next Steps

- Continued evaluation of the system and the review of incidents during an event so changes can be made to prevent reoccurrences.
- Software upgrades to handle the increased volume of events and data.
- Possible new requirements on who and what type of events must be registered.
- Continued coordination with the university community, local agencies (i.e., Fire Department), and others, as needed.

For Further Information

Contact:

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Student Activities Office: <http://www.activities.cornell.edu/events.htm>

Cornell University's EH&S website: <http://www.ehs.cornell.edu/>

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