



Chapter 12

Evaluating the Program

After you have hosted your event, there is still one important task left for your programming board. As part of the event, you will want to begin the evaluation process by having the audience turn in evaluation forms as they exit the event. Your programming board should have an established practice of conducting a post-evaluation meeting within four to five days after the event. This meeting can be simple or complex, based on the needs dictated by the nature of the event. Later in this chapter you will learn the basics of these two separate but complementary processes—the first of which occurs when the audience evaluates the program, and the second of which occurs as your programming board discusses these evaluations in addition to conducting their own evaluation of the event.

First, however, we will need to discuss the goals of an event evaluation process, as well as how this information can assist your programming board in meeting its educational mission. Assessment does this by helping your programming board know the types of events to program (See Chapter Three—Deciding What to Program). In addition, audience and programming

board evaluations of your events help your board document whether it is producing relevant and meaningful co-curricular activities, which offer students valuable out-of-the-classroom educational experi-

ences. Event evaluations also assist you by providing feedback that will help the board improve the event the next time it is held. It is a financial reality that student programming and residence life areas are being required to substantiate the co-curricular contributions they make in the overall development of students. Jeanne Pankanin (1995) believes “[co-curricular] involvement affects a student’s interpersonal skills, values, community involvement, job skills, loyalty to the college, and so forth” (p. 43). By conducting frequent evaluations and effectively summarizing

their results, your programming board will be able to demonstrate the co-curricular contributions it makes.

For example, the difference that student activities involvement makes in the lives of student program board members was documented in a 1995 survey of former student leaders at four-year liberal arts colleges in Illinois. The survey, spearheaded by

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Pankanin and a fellow colleague, was based on a total of 609 responses (a 26% return rate) and it documented a significant lasting beneficial effect on former student leaders. Of the survey respondents, 83% felt that student activities involvement promoted positive development of their interpersonal skills, 76% believed that student activities helped them in their careers by teaching them how to interact with many different types of people, 75% believed that their involvement during school prepared them for continued involvement in their community after college, and 91% believed that as much or more learning occurs outside the classroom as within (Pankanin, p. 44). Your ability to document similar results for the student participants of your programming board events may be necessary if your board is to achieve full future funding from your school. Your audience evaluations should help you with this goal, along with the generalized surveys, focus groups, or interviews that your board conducts on an annual or semi-annual basis (See Chapter Three).

Audience Evaluations

Audience evaluations can be great tools for improving the quality of your programs and for recognizing your programming board's successes or failures. Getting the audience to complete them can be a challenge, though. In designing your post-performance audience evaluation, try to make the experience as quick as possible. Most audience members will be in hurry or on their way somewhere else; keep this in mind when developing your evaluation form. Depending on the importance of the event and your board's need for feedback, you might want to consider having a small giveaway item on hand to entice response.

The form itself should be customized to the type of event and should list the specific event clearly at the top of the form. Keeping a somewhat consistent design for all your board's programs will also help respondents fill out the form as accurately and quickly as possible. To encourage as much feedback as possible, keep it reasonably short and simple, utilizing ratings scales as much as possible. However, you will want to include two or three open-ended questions, be-

cause these will contribute richness to the survey. Open-ended questions can also provide an opportunity for your students to give spontaneous feedback, which may be extremely beneficial for the insight it provides regarding the wants, needs, and concerns of your student body. To see how such a form might appear for a lecturer you have hosted on campus, see Example 12.1.

Ensuring a Representative Evaluation

As mentioned in Chapter Three, one of your obligations as a programmer is to exert a positive effect on your fellow students through activities that not only entertain but also contribute to their personal development. This is where you, as students, can play a role in the development of your peers. Through event evaluation—along with the assessment principles discussed in Chapter Three—you can gauge how well

**XYZ Programming Board
Audience Evaluation Form**

Lecturer: _____

Performance Date: _____

Your evaluation of this event is important to us and helps us make future programming decisions. Please take a minute to circle the appropriate responses. Thank you for your help!

Excellent	Above Avg.	Below Good	Avg.	Poor	
1. How would you rate the lecturer(s) on public speaking skills and knowledge of the material (i.e. articulate, relaxed, well organized, interesting, etc.)?					
Name of Lecturer: 1. _____	5	4	3	2	1
Name of Lecturer: 2. _____	5	4	3	2	1
2. How would you rate the format of the presentation?					
	5	4	3	2	1
3. How would you rate the quality of visual aids provided by this lecturer?					
N/A	5	4	3	2	1
4. Please rate the relevance/timeliness of this topic.					
	5	4	3	2	1
5. Please rate the suitability of the location of this lecture. Please explain a Poor or Below Average rating: _____					
6. What did you learn during this lecture? _____					
7. Why did you come? _____					
8. What, if anything, would you add or change? _____					
9. Would you be interested in hearing another speaker on a similar topic next semester? ____ Yes ____ No					
Are you a ____ Student? ____ Staff Member? ____ Faculty Member? ____ Local Community Member?					
Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 <input type="checkbox"/> 55 or older					
Race: <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Native American					
<input type="checkbox"/> African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Other					
(Optional) Name: _____ Daytime Phone: _____					

Example 12.1: Sample Audience Evaluation for a Campus Lecture

your activities are meeting the needs of the various student populations on your campus, in addition to meeting the needs of the predominant racial or ethnic campus population. One of the characteristics of a good event evaluation is that it does not assume all students learn in the same way and from the same experiences. Understanding and acknowledging the different backgrounds that are represented in your student body can lead to an understanding of the importance of identity development for your fellow students who are part of traditionally under-represented groups. For various reasons, people who don't see themselves as part of an under-represented population often lack an understanding of the difficulty faced by young people as they try to arrive at a sense of personal identity—an identity that takes into account their role as a member of an under-represented population.

As a programmer, you should try to develop an understanding of the impact that age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation can play in how many of your students learn, why they may find certain aspects of your activities programming enjoyable, and why they might consider other aspects offensive, or limiting, based on their search for a sense of identity. You can apply this theory of identity development to your evaluation process to assist in developing a more sophisticated understanding of the various needs and challenges your fellow students face as part of their college experience. For example, students from an under-represented population may feel a strong desire to hear career building advice from a role model they can identify with on a cultural or ethnic level.

In addition to relying on the success and enjoyment of the students who represent the dominant cultural and racial campus demographic group, you can also evaluate an event for its inclusiveness and the level of enjoyment it affords your students from various under-represented campus populations. For example, in setting up the venue for a comedian's performance, how was the seating arrangement received by any students who might have been in a wheelchair at this performance? Were their sight lines good? Was their seating positioned in such a way that they felt equally included? What about their able-bodied friends? Was the seating conducive to their mutual enjoyment? In evaluating the performer, questions you might ask could cover issues such as the cross-cultural appeal of his or her humor. Was any one group particularly dissatisfied with the performance and why, and did the performer play to a cross-section of the audience?

Sometimes your evaluation can demonstrate an openness to differing perspectives by simply including open ended questions that ask for your students' opinion on the suitability of the room, the content of a program, or the relevance of a given lecture topic. In evaluating your programming choices and events, be alert for assumptions that are based on stereotypes, such as an expectation that certain groups of people will not have an interest in this activity or that activity. Also, try to remain alert to significant absences of attendance. For example, research why your campus' Asian American or Hispanic students don't seem interested in your lecture series. Sometimes you can notice the absence of a group by simple observation—campus demographics indicate that your student body is approximately 30% Hispanic, yet your musical performances and dances routinely attract crowds that are 95% white. Your exit evaluations also support this visual observation, based on individual self-identification of the respondents (i.e. 95% of the respondents checked "White/Non-Hispanic"). To find out why this is so, you will need to get feedback from your Hispanic students on campus. There are several ways to do this. For example, you could begin a dialogue with a campus Hispanic student group or union, you could solicit feedback from entertainment agencies that specialize in representing Spanish-speaking musical artists—they may have counseled other schools in this respect. You could strike up a dialog with a neighboring programming board at a school with a similarly large Hispanic student population. On the other hand, if a particular activity seems especially appealing to one or more special populations on campus, find out what you're doing "right" and try to apply this understanding to those events that you wish were more inclusive in their appeal.

If your programming board lacks diversity in its composition, here are some suggestions quoted by Arminio (1993) that can help your board as it develops greater sensitivity to your students' search for identity and the need for inclusive evaluations:

- analyze stereotypes
- demonstrate patterns of personal and cultural preference [i.e. which events seem to appeal to which students]
- identify culturally appropriate responses to situations
- identify cultural logic in decision-making,
- recognize cultural non-verbal communication styles
- become aware of the literature of other cultures
- become aware of the themes of experience of different ethnic, racial and cultural groups in this country (p. 42).

Programming Board Evaluations

In evaluating your programs, consider using NACA's Exemplary Practices and Model Programs criteria as a starting point for developing an evaluation form and process tailored to your specific programming board's needs. In your evaluation meetings, you will want to refer to the results of your research/assessment survey, focus groups, interviews, general surveys, and audience evaluations for guidance. In addition to evaluating isolated events, you will also want to routinely re-evaluate ongoing items such as orientation programs, staff training and recruitment, Web-based programs and practices, and passive programs and practices (bulletin boards, program marketing, and so forth).

Artist Performance Reports

Just as you had audience members fill out evaluation forms to rate the event, your programming board should complete an NACA Artist Performance Report to help other schools in their booking decisions—provided, of course, that your school is an NACA member. This allows your school to evaluate items like audience size, audience reaction, artist's cooperation and attitude, cooperation of artist's representative, and quality of publicity materials. Your school can also comment briefly (35 words or less) on the program, or the booking or planning process, if needed. To submit an Artist Performance Report, please visit the NACA Web site at www.naca.org/NACA/Schools/ArtistPerformanceReports/.

Go Forth and Conquer

Now that you have learned the fundamentals of event evaluation, you have a full “toolbox” you can use to build, and troubleshoot as necessary, your school's campus activities program. A highly functional programming board can literally construct a sense of closeness in the campus community and can help students make the most of what can be an extremely enjoyable and challenging period in their lives. From team building and assessment to contract negotiation and event planning, from promotion to evaluation, your campus programming board truly functions as a business, with an overall mission that it shares with all other programming boards: to enrich and enhance your students' college experience through meaningful and enjoyable co-curricular activities. As a final bit of advice, try to always remember how much your volunteer efforts can affect the quality of campus life. Strive to make this effect a positive one.

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