

Banquet Planning Guide

This planning guide holds the keys to a successful banquet that will **WOW** your supporters and showcase your chapter!



Make an investment in your chapter and yourself. Plan your banquet so people leave enthusiastic, inspired and motivated.

They will never forget it and neither will you!

PLAN EARLY, EARLY, EARLY!

It's **NEVER** too early to begin plans for your banquet!

Banquet Planning Timeline Checklist

Develop banquet plan around the list of activities in the timeline below. If you address the items in this list you will be guaranteed a well-planned and organized banquet. Challenge your chapter to make decisions early in the school year in order to have plenty of time to prepare for your annual banquet.

5-6 Months prior to banquet

- ☐ Identify a planning committee and assign responsibilities and deadlines
- ☐ Decide on the type of banquet you want to have and a theme
- ☐ Decide when and where to have and reserve facilities
- ☐ Prepare a budget so committee members know how much they have to spend

3-4 Months out

- ☐ Invite speaker(s)
- ☐ Line up equipment
- ☐ Prepare invitation list and order invitations

2 Months out

- ☐ Prepare recognition list
- ☐ Prepare layout of facilities
- ☐ Plan decorations
- ☐ Plan your program
- ☐ Plan Displays
- ☐ Develop Public Relations plan
- ☐ Order awards, gifts, supplies and decorations



1 Month out

- ☐ Send out invitations
- ☐ Prepare "Set-Up" Checklist

Week of Banquet

- ☐ Review Program and rehearse

The day after

- ☐ Send thank you notes
- ☐ Deliver photos & news releases to print media
- ☐ Start Planning for Next Year!

Get Organized!

Have your banquet committee set up a filing cabinet drawer or card-board box with a file folder for each of the banquet planning areas. Keep copies of correspondence, receipts, programs and scripts.

You'll have all the information you need at your fingertips during the year for you planning and you'll have a great head start for next year!

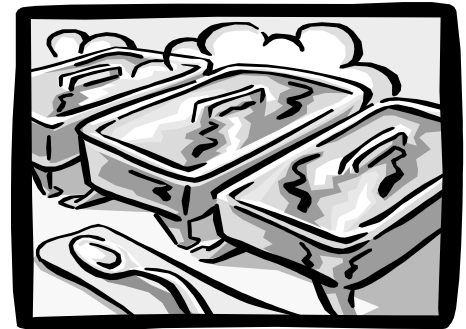
5 to 6 Months Prior to Banquet

☐ Identify a Planning Committee and Assign Responsibilities and Deadlines

- Divide the committee into planning areas and give everyone a chance to participate. Some possible planning areas include:
 - program planning
 - award presenters
 - greeters
 - set-up
 - speaker introductions
 - serving & clean-up
 - MC's
 - hosts for speakers & special guests
- Determine what needs to be done and by whom. (Use Banquet Checklist in Advisor's Guide to Student Handbook - Appendix C)
- Post a chart of responsibilities on the wall with dates to be completed and who is responsible for each one. **Leave a space to fill in the status.*
- Ask for an update on weekly basis.

☐ Decide on the Type of Banquet and Theme

- What will it be - evening ceremony, barbecue, picnic, ice cream social, pot luck dinner, catered, formal/informal?
- This information is crucial to you planning committee and needs to be passed on to participants, speakers and attendees so that everyone is informed.



☐ Decide When and Where

- Clear the date, time and activity with school officials.
- Put the date on the school calendar so that other activities are not scheduled for the same time and place.
- Decide where the banquet will be held and reserve facilities. Consider weather, size of crowd, acoustics, available equipment, stage, parking, lighting, etc.
- Some options may include school facilities, local restaurant, park, civic club or church.
- Call a month in advance to reconfirm (get something in writing to be sure the date, time and space are correct).

☐ Prepare a Budget

- Include estimated income and expenses.
- Review the budget with you advisor and ask for procedures.
- Consider selling meal tickets (include this as estimated income).
- Consider sponsors to help pay for expenses. (awards, scholarships, etc.)

3 to 4 Months Prior to Banquet

☐ Invite Speaker(s)

- Determine what you want the speaker(s) to discuss and for how long.
- Put together a list of prospective speakers (consider parents, school board members, Alumni members, WLC/MFE staff, community leaders, national, state and chapter officers).
- Present this list to the planning committee or chapter and take a vote.
- Select the top 2-3 nominees and invite the top nominee.
- Start Early. If the first invitee declines then you still have several alternatives left.
- Send invitation to speaker(s) that includes: an FFA fact sheet, copy of a recent FFA *New Horizons* magazine, current manual, banquet theme, date, time they should arrive, directions to facility, who will be attending, the speaker's focus, amount of time for speech, length of banquet and what type of dress - casual/formal/semi-formal.
- Confirm if there are any speaker fees and if special equipment is required.
- Send a written confirmation.
- Call a week in advance and reconfirm.
- Provide a gift for the speaker, even if you pay a fee, so they will remember your chapter in the future. (If someone speaks "free", remember to offer them something for there expenses, especially for a state officer or college student.)

☐ Line Up Equipment

- Be sure to check with other committee members, your advisor and speakers about their needs. Some possible equipment needs include: microphone, slide projector, extension cords, camera, tape/CD player, VCR/TV, film projector & screen, music, spotlights, tables, chairs, podium, trash cans, U.S., State and FFA flags and other official paraphernalia.
- Is there a rental fee?

☐ Prepare Invitation List and Order Invitations

Who needs to know about your chapter?

Make a list of all the people who can have a positive impact on your chapter.

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • administrators | • sponsors & supporters | • other organizations |
| • principal | • alumni members | (DECA, BPA) |
| • guidance counselors | • potential new members | • local politicians |
| • teachers | • parents of potential new | • chamber of commerce |
| • school board members | members | members |
| • university staff | • agricultural organization | • local media |
| • support staff, | members | personalities |
| custodians | • district or state FFA officers | • local garden club |
| • advisor's family | • neighboring chapter members | members |
| • parents & family | & advisor | |

2 Months Prior to Banquet

☐ Prepare Recognition List

- With your advisor, determine what recognitions are going to be presented and to whom.
- Order award pins, plaques, trophies, certificates, ribbons and gifts
- Prepare a list of award and recognition recipients to this chart for quick, easy reference.

RECOGNITION LIST	Award Pin	Plaque	Trophy	Certificate	Ribbon	Gift
<i>Chapter Greenhands</i>						
<i>Chapter FFA Degree</i>						
<i>Star Chapter FFA Degree</i>						
<i>Honorary Chapter FFA Degree</i>						
<i>Proficiency Winners</i>						
<i>Event Winners</i>						
<i>ParliPro Winners/Teams</i>						
<i>Speaking Winners</i>						
<i>Creed Speaking Winners</i>						
<i>Scholarship Winners</i>						
<i>Retiring Officers</i>						
<i>New Officers</i>						
<i>Administrators</i>						
<i>School Board Members</i>						
<i>Sponsors</i>						
<i>Supporters</i>						
<i>Alumni</i>						
<i>Potential New Members</i>						
<i>Banquet Planners</i>						
<i>Banquet Speaker(s)</i>						

☐ Prepare Layout of the Facilities

- Include tables, chairs, podium, serving lines, head tables and exits in your layout.
- Check the lighting - is it adequate?
- What about the room size? Is the room too big for the number of people attending?
If so, you may want to consider setting up displays in the back, redesigning the set-up, or not using the stage to bring everyone together.

☐ Plan the Decorations

- Coordinate your decorations with the theme.
- What decorations are needed?
- How much money is available in the budge for decorations?
- Who will put the decorations in place?
- Contact a local florist about donating floral centerpieces or have your floriculture members make them.
- Use table decorations as door prizes.

☐ **Order Awards, Gifts, Supplies and Decorations**

- Consider gifts for outstanding supporters, speakers, new officers, behind-the-scenes parents and sponsors and your advisor!

☐ **Plan Your Program**

- Plan a general program agenda.
- Include a beginning, main content and ending.
- Order Program covers.
- Have the program typed and get enough programs printed for each attendee.
- Determine what functions need to be done during the banquet and who will do them.
- Prepare a detailed script that everyone can follow.
- Do a draft first and ask for suggestions from everyone. Then produce a revised version.

☐ **Program Management Tips**

- The more professionally you run your banquet, the easier it will be.
- Rehearse - walk through your program step-by-step.
- Have awards in order on table close to the presentation area, clearly marked
- Make sure people can get to stage.
- Recognize groups, like contest teams, all together.
- Keep it fast moving. A good program length is two hours.
- Make sure chairperson or MC is competent, knows what's happening and has rehearsed the program.
- Leave your participants with a message about what you're doing: encourage them to continue to

☐ **Plan Displays**

- Determine what is to be displayed or demonstrated.
- Set up a display of the chapter's awards and consider your Program of Activities notebook, Official Scrapbook, award winning applications, SAE projects or a slide show.
- Plan a layout of your display space.
- Find out what equipment will be needed.
- Plan a timeframe for set-up.
- Let people involved know in writing in advance when their display has to be completely set-up and limitations as to size of type.
- Follow up several times to ensure the participation.
- Recognize outstanding displays with certificate, ribbon, etc.
- Be there during set-up and lend a hand if needed.

☐ **Develop Public Relations Plan**

- What do they expect? To be entertained? An exciting program? To have fun? Let them know that a lot of planning has gone into making it an exceptional event through pre-banquet promotion.
- Invite media contacts.
- Set up interviews with media for officers, award winners, etc.
- Have a photography session before the banquet.
- Send out news releases.
- Write an article for the school or local paper.
- Put an ad on the TV or radio news.

1 Month Prior to Banquet

- ☐ **Send Out Invitations**
- ☐ **Prepare a Banquet "Set-Up" Checklist**
 - Set up PA system and lighting
 - Check layout temperature (cool)
 - Check Proximity of speaker (should be close to audience)
 - Set up flags
 - Display banners or theme billboards
 - Set up head table with name markers
 - Set up plaques, pins, awards, etc. on head table or close to presentation area.
 - Put on tablecloths or cover tables in paper, decorate tables & set out programs
 - Set up reception table
 - Make sure noise and visual interferences are eliminated - pots & pans, plates and/or other distractions.

Week of Banquet

- ☐ **Review Program and Rehearse**

The Day After

- ☐ **Send Thank You Notes**
 - Reinforce the positive impression your guests have of you and your chapter - **SEND THANK YOU'S.**
 - Don't forget National Proficiency Award and CDE Sponsors.
- ☐ **Deliver Photos and News Releases to Print Media**
- ☐ **Start Planning for Next Year**
 - Be sure to get recommendations or suggestions for next year.
 - Make sure all committee member submit a final committee report



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