Event Coordinators' Network

Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

About the Event Coordinators' Network

In July 2007, the Event Coordinators' Council (ECC) was created in an effort to centralize communication and improve collaboration among those with event planning responsibilities throughout Georgia Tech. The initial ECC members realized many of their peers were also interested in receiving event management resources and that the Institute would benefit from more centralized, collaborative, and effective event planning. Therefore, they developed the Event Coordinators' Network (ECN), a group of self-selected staff members who are interested in event planning or expanding their skill sets at Georgia Tech. In 2010, the ECC restructured to include a leadership committee — the Event Leadership Team (EVLT) — responsible for ECN strategic oversight and direction. In 2014, the organization served more than 375 members from more than 60 different departments and units across campus, delivering monthly newsletters, quarterly professional development sessions, biannual networking events, and an annual workshop.

ECN Vision

The Event Coordinators' Network will become the model for university event planning.

ECN Mission

The Event Coordinators' Network will provide faculty, staff, and students with a centralized repository to aid in effectively coordinating events that represent the Georgia Institute of Technology through its primary areas of focus, which include networking, resources, and development.

ECN Strategic Planning Process

Leaders within the ECN approached the Office of Strategic Consulting in December 2013 to develop a strategic plan. Work quickly began in January 2014, with the announcement of the plan to administrators, members, and ECN partners. A steering committee was formed of EVLT members and two active general members, who then identified task force members and appropriate stakeholders. The steering committee created a survey administered to all members of the ECN, which garnered a 29.4 percent response rate and SWOT analysis results for the organization. A survey was also conducted with internal and external stakeholders; those individuals believed to either work directly with members of the ECN or have a vested interest in the success of Georgia Tech events. Results from the stakeholder survey, in which 36 percent responded, were then combined with ECN responses and used to generate four fundamental goals for the plan.

Once goals were established in the spring of 2014, the steering committee met to develop three strategies per goal, which would serve as the basis for the creation of action initiatives. In June 2014, they enlisted the assistance of task force members and engaged ECN members who had attended more than six ECN events within the past two years to create realistic action initiatives for each strategy. Initiatives were prioritized and refined by the task force members, then sent back to the steering committee for final review. In the fall of 2014, the plan was drafted and vetted through the ECN task force and stakeholders to ensure accuracy and inclusion of all pertinent ideas. The steering committee shared the plan with their supervisors and Institute leadership prior to final production. The plan was formally announced to ECN membership at the 6th Annual Event Coordinators' Network Workshop: Designing for Excellence on November 19, 2014.

Georgia Tech's Strategic Plan

In 2010, Georgia Tech unveiled "Designing the Future: A Strategic Vision and Plan," which outlines a vision for where the Institute aspires to be in the year 2035. Within the plan are five strategic goals:

1. Be among the most highly respected technology-focused learning institutions in the world

2. Sustain and enhance excellence in scholarship and research

3. Ensure that innovation, entrepreneurship, and public service are fundamental characteristics of our graduates

4. Expand our global footprint and influence to ensure that we are graduating good global citizens

5. Relentlessly pursue institutional effectiveness

Using Georgia Tech's model as the foundation for discussion, the ECN presents the following strategic plan that will lead the organization through the next three to five years.

GOAL ONE:

Ensure the ECN is recognized, respected, and valued

Strategy 1:
Elevate awareness of the ECN

INITIATIVES:
- Develop a comprehensive communications plan, which could include:
  - ✓ "Event Planning Resources" button on pertinent Georgia Tech sites that provides access to event planning information
  - ✓ Peer-to-peer marketing efforts
  - ✓ Inclusion of ECN activities in Institute campus communication outlets
  - ✓ Creation of ECN email signature
  - ✓ Prominent positioning of ECN page in Special Events & Protocol site
- Develop a leadership memo to distribute annually regarding ROI and how their employees' involvement in the ECN will benefit their department

Strategy 2:
Position the ECN as event planning leaders

INITIATIVES:
- Develop an ECN advisory board
- Encourage ECN members to promote their event acumen and include their ECN work in their performance management process
- Assess OHR employee database and ensure event leaders are members or invited to join the ECN

Strategy 3:
Develop measures of success for the ECN

INITIATIVES:
- Work with research analyst to develop survey instrument to develop meaningful metrics
- Create an annual report that is shared with Institute leadership
- Develop process to review goals on an annual basis

GOAL TWO:

Develop an engaged and contributing ECN community

Strategy 1:
Develop membership roles and expectations

INITIATIVES:
- Create a membership committee that will be responsible for:
  - ✓ Defining leadership and membership profiles, roles, and expectations
  - ✓ Creating and using a membership application for new members
  - ✓ Developing a tracking system to measure current members' levels of engagement and involvement
  - ✓ Creating an online membership directory with profiles of members, including their years of experience, events in which they specialize, etc.

Strategy 2:
Develop a recruiting strategy

INITIATIVES:
- Develop a list of member benefits
- Create web-based advertising, as well as printed collateral
- Attend New Employee Experience and Benefits Fair to promote the ECN
- Hold a membership drive

Strategy 3:
Develop a retention strategy

INITIATIVES:
- Develop a mentoring program
- Promote using active ECN participation in members' performance management and goal setting process

GOAL THREE:

Elevate the quality of Georgia Tech events

Strategy 1:
Define standards of excellence for Georgia Tech events

INITIATIVES:
- Create and continually update a protocol and standards workbook
- Establish and foster relationships with campus building managers and assist in creating standards for booking space
- Establish a stakeholder/manager task force to routinely discuss Georgia Tech event standards including, but not limited to, signage, message, event design, nametag structure, etc.

Strategy 2:
Provide professional growth and development opportunities for all levels of event planning expertise

INITIATIVES:
- Create a basic event training track for new employees, or employees who are changing jobs and taking on event responsibilities
- Establish tracks based on experience level to further improve event planning skills of all members and inspire event planning innovation
- Develop a unique training/certification program

Strategy 3:
Strengthen access to information and collaborative support

INITIATIVES:
- Establish and foster a culture of customer service and etiquette through discussion with internal and external vendors
- Ensure regular ECN representation at the Event Logistics Committee meetings and other standing campus committees
- Create an information access listserv or "Pinterest-like" board for event collaboration and resource sharing
- Create internal process for sharing of departmental resources

GOAL FOUR:

Provide an information-rich environment that fosters community, growth, and innovation

Strategy 1:
Ensure the ECN continually provides an inclusive, welcoming, and supportive climate and culture

INITIATIVES:
- Host a quarterly gathering to welcome new ECN members, celebrate member anniversaries, and highlight "Good of the Group" moments
- Establish an annual event schedule to include town halls, community building activities, brown bag sessions, and the workshop

Strategy 2:
Cultivate a united network of event planners who are committed to the exploration of new and innovative professional practices

INITIATIVES:
- During quarterly meetings, include training component that discusses a best new practice, demonstrates new technology, showcases new vendors, etc.
- Plan biannual question and answer sessions open to the campus community
- Provide a scholarship program that allows one ECN member to attend an external professional meeting/conference each year

Strategy 3:
Develop collaborative relationships and initiatives with external organizations

INITIATIVES:
- Establish and maintain relationships with external organizations
- Create and maintain a list of external organizations' contacts
- Co-sponsor an event with another university