SELECTING SPEAKERS AND ENTERTAINMENT

INITIAL PLANNING
• What are your goals? Do you want to educate, entertain, or persuade? Express these goals to the speaker and/or entertainment and ensure these needs can be met.
• Assess venue for best set-up/entertainment scenarios.
• Consult your budget to determine appropriate entertainment expenses. Include travel, car rental, meals, and accommodations for entertainer.

BEFORE HIRING
• Meet in person, watch a performance, or ask for a demo tape of the entertainer.
• Discuss the specific program for your event.
• Try to negotiate a flat fee.
• See if speaker is willing to include travel, hotel, etc. in the fee, or pay his/her own way.
• Ensure the venue can accommodate your entertainer.
• Review contract and rider with Procurement/Purchasing before agreement is signed.

PREPARING FOR YOUR ENTERTAINER/SPEAKER
• If musical entertainment, arrange for something to fill in during breaks.
• Discuss and confirm all equipment/AV needs:
  o Lectern, microphone, overhead projector, LCD panel, video equipment
  o Check to ensure that the room can accommodate the equipment (i.e. power supply, appropriate equipment, etc.)
• Be thorough about technical requirements:
  o Check computer compatibility.
  o Know on-site AV/performer policies.
  o Meet with on-site technician and ensure you can contact him/her in an emergency.
• Check access to freight elevators, if needed.
• Ensure entertainment set-up is aware of freight elevator location.
• When arranging your schedule, account for set-up and tear-down of equipment.
• Check all microphones and sound levels well in advance.
• Discuss with speaker the time allotted for his/her presentation and how much time should be left for Q&A.
• Send your entertainer an information packet including: event itinerary, sample script, talking points, overview of the audience demographic, parking pass(es), parking map, and any other significant information to ensure his/her success.
• If a team-building activity is planned, make sure it suits your group’s demographics and will not exclude anyone.
• Ensure you receive bio/photo of your entertainer for program and public relations opportunities. Photo must be high resolution for printed materials.
• Check sight lines to the stage or podium.
• Ensure your speaker is not placed in front of an area that will be distracting to him/her or the audience.
• If podium is used, place fresh arrangements at the base.
• Arrange for a speaker’s room (Green Room) where he or she can do last-minute preparations.
• Check to see if speaker will provide handout materials or if you will need to provide copies.
  o Be Green: Encourage attendees to visit websites prior to or after presentation for further information.
• If staff members are presenting and need help with speaking skills, consider hiring a theater professional to work with them on stage presence, body language, and delivery.

DAY OF EVENT
• Assign and introduce a volunteer to serve as the speaker’s/entertainer’s ambassador for the day.
• Ensure the speaker can locate the light switches, operate his/her equipment, and feels comfortable with mics, if applicable.
• Ensure water is available at the podium.
• Discuss a signal you can give the speaker if he/she has reached the time limit.

AFTER YOUR EVENT
• Follow up to ensure your speaker/entertainer was pleased, had no travel problems, etc.
• Send a thank-you, including any pictures and materials of the event, to your entertainer.