OTTERBEIN UNIVERSITY | **OFFICE OF EVENTS & CONFERENCES**

Meetings, Events and Gatherings
COVID-19 Processes and Guidelines
as of September 22, 2020

<mark>Additions or changes are highlighted in YELLOW.</mark>

As Otterbein begins to plan and hold events and gatherings, the following considerations are for enhancing protection of individuals and communities and helping to prevent the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). As event planners and officials can determine, in collaboration with the Office of Events and Conferences and Risk Management adjustments to an event may have unique needs based on the intended outcome, audience and group. The following guidelines are meant to supplement—not replace—any other Otterbein, state or local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which gatherings must comply. Organizers should continue to assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees for each gathering.

This document is meant to help event and conference planners in the process of planning a safe event. This includes student organizations. The Office of Events and Conferences and the University have the right to deny any event or gathering that does not meet these guidelines or occupancy guidelines. In addition, if it is found a group moves furniture or does not follow the guidelines that group or department may lose their ability to reserve rooms in the future.

Guiding Principles
- A gathering refers to a planned or spontaneous event or meeting, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.
- The more people an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.
- The higher the level of community transmission in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.
- The size of an event or gathering should be determined based on state and local safety laws and regulations.

General Guidelines
- All event attendees must be wearing a face covering.
- Group gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people (except classes). Room occupancy may dictate a smaller gathering size than previously.
- <mark>If an event falls outside of a normal classroom set-up, the event must follow the specific mandate for that type of event from the Director of the Ohio Department of Health and may be able to exceed the 10-person directive depending on the event.</mark>
    - <mark>A detailed plan of how the event will follow these guidelines is required when filling out the Event Inquiry Form through the Office of Events and Conferences. Please upload your plan as an attachment.</mark>

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- All events must have a staff member present to ensure all COVID-19 guidelines are being followed by all participants.
- Attendance must be taken at all events to ensure contact tracing is being completed.
- All attendees must complete a COVID-19 self-assessment before attending any event or conference on campus.
- All event attendees must maintain 6' physical distancing whenever possible.
- The hosting of external events or rentals with outside guests coming to campus for the most part will not be approved through December 31, 2020. A few exceptions will be made.
- The hosting of internal events that bring outside guests to campus may not be approved through December 31, 2020. When filling out your request, please describe the interaction guests would have with any Faculty, Staff or student part of the Otterbein community.

Hosting an Event or Conference
- Please follow the normal process for submitting an event or conference through the Office of Event and Conferences website at www.otterbein.edu/oec. Once on the site, click "Host and Event" and complete an Event Inquiry Form.
- Please include as much information as possible when filling out the form. This allows for an evaluation of the event, the requested space and based on the description an ability to move forward in reserving a space or not.

Occupancy in Classrooms and Event Spaces
- New occupancy limits in both classrooms and event spaces will be set to maintain 6' physical distance. Please note: rooms you previously used for an event may not allow for the size of your group. When submitting your inquiry, please be as accurate as possible for group size on the form.
    - *For example: A room in the library that historically holds 50, is now set for 16. Or a room in Roush that historically holds 72 is now 28.*

Weekly Meetings
- It is encouraged if you historically held weekly meetings to decrease the amount of in-person meetings to every other week or less.

Classrooms and Event Space Regulations
- If you reserve a classroom, have received approval and hold your event, you are responsible for the following:
    - Sanitizing the space when you arrive. Cleaning supplies will be in each room or in a designated location. Sanitizing the space when you vacate.
    - NOT moving any furniture in the room. The furniture is placed for physical distancing and should not be moved.

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- Remove all food trash or decorations from the room and take to a dumpster. REMINDER: the dumpster colors have a different meaning, RED = Recycle and TAN = Trash.

Miscellaneous Guidelines and Things to Consider

- If you need a computer to project in a classroom, please plan to bring your work issued or personal laptop.
- No event games will be available for check-out from the Campus Center until further notice.
  - Examples of event games included: Cornhole and volleyball
- "Tabling" on campus will not be allowed until further notice. Tabling is where groups hand out items or raise awareness about a topic while standing at a table.
- For an external group, please include additional way finding signs or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing and assist guests in finding rooms, catering, etc.
- Eliminate lines or queues if possible or encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing signs or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks.
- Offer online attendance options in addition to in-person attendance to help reduce the number of attendees.
- Offer pre-registration and on-line ticketing whenever possible. Walk-ins should not be allowed, because visitor self-assessments should have taken place prior to the event. Allowing someone to walk-into an event does not give enough time to explain the self-assessment process.
- A planned intermission or break is not recommended as a group all going to the restroom or taking a break creates a traffic flow problem. If guests need a break, please communicate with the attendees they are welcome to leave a space as needed.
- Consider different entrance and exits for a space whenever possible to create clear traffic flow and to help with physical distancing.
  - For example, in a "pre-event mode" once seating begins, a separate door should be available if someone should need to exit to use the restroom.
- It may be necessary to require restroom monitors specifically to make sure that the proper number of individuals are in the facility at one time, and also note that additional cleaning personnel may be necessary to maintain facilities throughout the event.
- It is recommended to have reserved seating to best observe social distancing in large spaces. However, when this is not possible, event organizers are permitted to have general admission with recommended distancing marked on seats.

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Food and Catering
- Food and Catering guidelines are outlined by the CDC, local and state guidelines. If you are interested in providing any kind of pre-packaged or any catering for your event, a meeting must be set-up with the Office of Events and Conferences and your preferred cater. On campus events typically use our in-house catering company, Parkhurst Dining.
- Even handing out of pre-packaged food, needs a meeting or a conversation to talk through risks and how to accomplish the events goals with decreasing the potential for spread of COVID-19.

Shared Objects
- Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.
- Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of staff members or attendees at a time, and clean and disinfect them between use.

Lessons Learned After the Event
- Meet with the Office of Events and Conferences or planning team to discuss and note lessons learned. Because these considerations and polices are changing so quickly, this is a helpful review for other groups and event planners.
- Determine ways to improve planning and implementation processes for if the event will happen again or for others planning an event.
- Update any plans regularly according to the state and local situation and orders.