

# How to Present a Public Program

By Morton C. Blackwell



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## **Introduction**

This manual is written especially for leaders of independent conservative student organizations or student divisions of campaigns who use public programs as a part of an overall strategy to advance a cause or a candidate of their choice.

However, most techniques are equally applicable by anyone organizing public programs such as student governments, speakers committees, professional clubs, educational groups, and entertainment programs, to name a few.

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# Table of Contents

Introduction	
Purposes and Types of Programs	
1. Simple Open Programs	1
2. Major Public Programs	2
Planning the Event	
1. Location and Facilities	4
2. Invitations	7
3. Filling the Speaker's Schedule	10
4. Physical Arrangements	11
Drawing a Crowd	
1. Advertising	13
2. Personal Outreach	14
3. Media Outreach	14
4. Coalition Outreach	15
5. Social Media Outreach	15
6. Concluding Thoughts on Outreach	16
Managing the Public Program	
1. Before the Program Begins	17
2. Introducing the Speaker	18
3. The Program	19
4. Questions	19
5. Documentation	20
6. The Recruitment Opportunity	21
After the Event - Capitalizing Through Publicity	22
Conclusion	23
Resources	24
Morton C. Blackwell	25
About Leadership Institute	26

# Purposes and Types of Public Programs

A campus political organization should schedule about one program a month and two or three major public program presentations a year in addition to your regular meetings.

## ***1. Simple open programs***

These smaller, monthly programs educate and keep group members involved and interested in the group. Such programs may help to recruit new members. No special effort has to be made to bring in non-students, although each program should be announced in the campus paper, on bulletin boards, in a Facebook group or page, as well as emailed out to members.

Ideas for smaller programs include:

- A school official
- A local newspaper editor or reporter
- A panel of club members from an affiliate club on another campus
- A movie or documentary
- A local business or professional leader
- A local political party leader speaking on party matters
- An author
- A debate watch party

### **Helpful tip:**

Public programs are highly effective tools for club membership recruitment.



*Example of a debate watch party*

Many groups have considerable success with informal discussion meetings. The group might meet in the student union building or at a local restaurant and invite a speaker with some special knowledge about a topic of current interest.

The speaker gives a fifteen- or twenty-minute presentation and then leads an open-ended question-and-answer period with club members.

The club should welcome speakers on different topics to expose the club members to a useful and interesting array of opinions.



*Example of a small monthly meeting*

## ***2. Major public programs***

Major public programs should draw an audience well beyond a group's membership. They can convince undecided students and build enthusiasm among your group's members. Many major political leaders first got involved in politics after personal contact with a policy expert, candidate, or an important government official during a public program on campus.

An important function of these public programs is their use as media events. This allows you to affect those who didn't attend the event itself as well as raise your group's public profile.

You may change some minds among the people who come, but most people who take the time to go to a political rally or publicized speech already have their minds made up. Therefore, pay particular attention to attracting media coverage with this event.

Some examples of events where you want to maximize attendance and publicity are:

- A nationally-known conservative speaker
- A governor, senator, representative, or other major office holder
- Candidates or potential candidates
- State or national party leaders
- National leaders of political organizations
- Well-known book authors
- Visiting columnists
- Visiting economists or stock market experts
- Foreign policy experts
- Foreign diplomats
- Debates between Republican and Democratic officials
- Political rallies
- Films shown for educational purposes, for public relations, or for profit

### Helpful tip:

Always have a sign-up sheet at every event.

Be sure to choose your major public program speakers carefully. Select those who will effectively promote your club's philosophy. You're not in business to provide audiences for your opposition.

Your major event can feature a single speaker, or several who engage in a panel discussion. Seminars of half-a-day or full-day duration, while requiring greater effort and organization, can also draw a crowd.

Major events require considerable time for planning and preparation. So you will probably not want to host more than two or three such major events per year.



*Example of a large public program*



# Planning the Event

## ***1. Location and facilities***

Before any event takes place, your club should inventory the potential meeting locations. Most colleges have a list of locations available and will give it to you upon request.

You can eliminate a lot of last-minute headaches and be prepared to make quick decisions if you already have a sheet which lists the capacity, audio/visual capabilities, cost, and scheduling authority's contact information for every potential site.



*The 2015 College Democrat National Conference was held in a room which was too large. The excessive empty seats made the event look like a flop.*

Always underestimate crowds for a public program. It is far better to have an audience of 175 packed into a room which seats only 150 than to have an audience of 200 in a 300 seat auditorium.

In one case, the newspaper headline would read, "Conservative speaks to overflow crowd," and in the other case, even with greater turnout, the story might read: "Sparse turnout for conservative speaker at the university."



*A smaller but filled room looks more successful.*

If you have to apologize, you'd rather apologize to an overflow crowd about a room a little too small than to your speaker for all the empty seats in a larger hall.

The ideal situation is to have an expandable room. Many rooms have dividers which can easily be slid back. If you can reserve such a room, do so.

When Ronald Reagan was scheduled to speak in the Assembly Center (which seats 7,000 when set up for a speaker) at Louisiana State University during his 1980 presidential campaign, his youth coordinator set up curtains to shrink the auditorium to seat only 2,000. Three times, the curtains had to be moved and more chairs brought in.

The event started nearly half an hour



*Students were forced to climb trees due to an overflow for a 2012 Ron Paul rally organized by Leadership Institute-trained activist Tyler Koteskey.*

## Helpful tip:

When selecting a site, choosing a room too large is the single most frequent mistake made by campus groups in their planning of public programs.

late.

The constant increases in the seating area and requests for people to make more room because far more people had arrived than were expected created enormous expectation and excitement. Ronald Reagan himself dubbed it the “most successful event in my campaign to date.”

Other options include providing a large screen TV and loudspeakers in another room for those who are not able to fit in the main hall.

Since some reporters may arrive late, make sure you reserve enough good space for them. Place them near the back of the room to ensure they are capturing the crowd in their photos. Mark it off as the “media section.” Television cameras may require a raised platform in the middle of the room.

Other considerations in choosing a meeting room include central location, easy walking

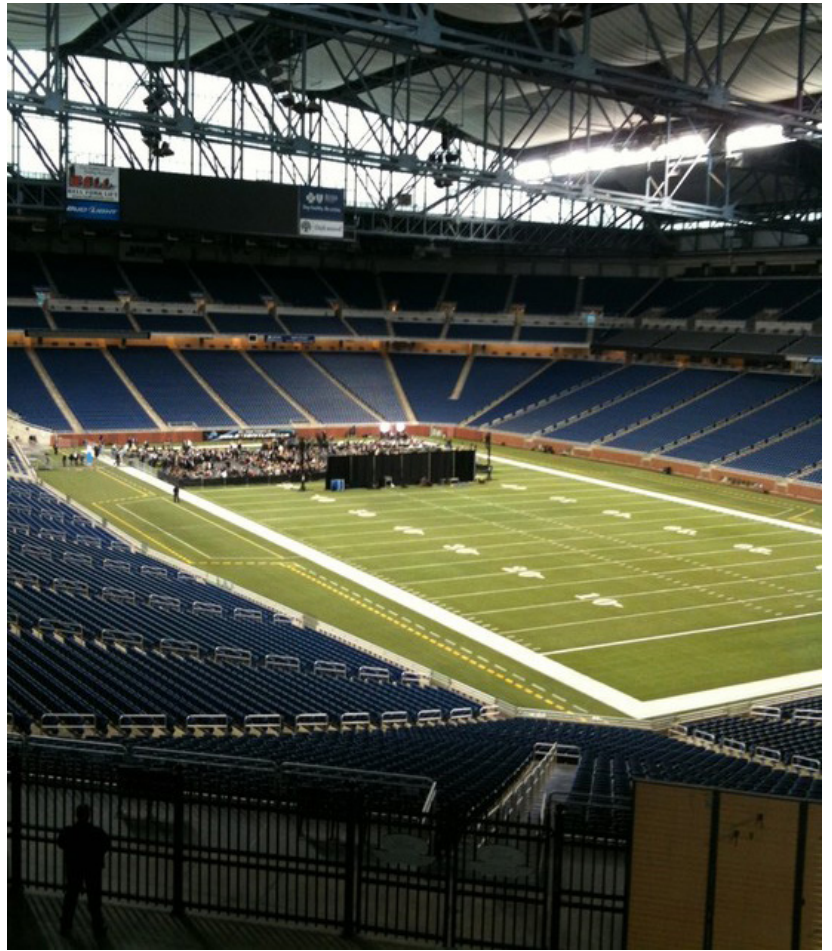


## Helpful tip:

Open-air events are often flops as political rallies because it is difficult to make the event look well attended.

distance from parking and dormitories, a well-known location, good acoustics, and availability of a good sound system. For major events, have a portable emergency sound system available just in case the built-in system suffers an attack of the gremlins.

If your speaker is particularly effective in a question-and-answer period, another type of public program presentation which can be successful is an open-air speech at mid-day in a campus area with much foot traffic. A good portable public address system and a slightly raised platform can draw a good crowd.



*Open-air spaces are hard to fill with attendees.*



*Ron Paul effectively using an open-air space at UCLA.*

## 2. *Invitations*

When trying to obtain a “big name” speaker for a major public program, the three most important factors are advance notice, flexibility in dates, and solid guarantees of a well-organized, well-attended event.

Invite speakers well ahead of time. Advance planning gives you time to draw a big crowd and fire up your troops for the event. Major speakers often require booking months in advance.

Be clear about what dates and times are not good. Avoid weekends, especially on commuter campuses. Events the week before mid-terms and final exams could also be problematic. Check the calendar of campus activities and give an invitee as many alternative dates as you can.

### Helpful tip:

The three most important factors when inviting a major speaker are:

1. Advance notice
2. Flexibility in dates
3. Guarantees of a well-organized, well-attended event.

Avoid scheduling your event on dates that conflict with:

- Large sporting events
- Finals or midterms (or surrounding)
- School breaks
- Major campus events
- Local campaign events
- Holidays

### Helpful tip:

Scheduling your event during a major-rival sporting event is not a good idea. Even if it is away.

Your speaker will want to know this is a serious invitation which, if accepted, will result in a successful event. You should carefully type on club letterhead (if you don't have it, make it) all the details, including:

- The name of the sponsoring organization
- The approximate size of the expected crowd
- Nature of the meeting (rally, dinner, debate, panel, or featured speaker)
- The suggested topics of the event (You can leave the speaker some freedom to choose topics if you wish, but it's still a good idea to suggest a few.)



- Whether there will be a question-and-answer period following the speech
- Your intention to pay travel expenses and accommodations
- The payment you can offer, if any
- Opportunities for news media coverage
- Possible auxiliary activities, if your speaker has time

If your group and the speaker share the same cause, and your program will advance this cause, let the speaker know that, too.

Prominent people who know you and are known to the speaker might serve as references for your group. Ask these people to endorse your invitation with letters, emails, or phone calls to your invitee.

A short history of other successful major programs your group has sponsored will help persuade a speaker to accept your invitation.

If you don't know how to get in touch with the speaker you desire, the Leadership Institute may be able to help.

### Helpful tip:

Always ask the speaker beforehand if they will do a Q & A session at the end of the speech; never just assume they will.

### Helpful tip:

The Leadership Institute helps independent conservative groups bring speakers to campus.

Request a speaker by visiting [LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus](http://LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus)

The Leadership Institute (LI) helps independent conservative groups bring speakers to campus. If you have a specific person in mind, LI may be able to help you get in touch with the speaker to arrange the details of the visit.

After you invite the speaker, it is a good idea to phone his or her office a week after mailing the invitation to be sure it was received and to ask if the speaker's staff have any questions you can answer.

Once the speaker accepts, ask him or her to send you photos, biographical information, and useful information about the topic to be covered.

After the event is set, maintain regular contact with the speaker's scheduler. Phone the speaker's office a week in advance and again a day in advance of the event to be sure everything is still scheduled.

*Below is a sample letter of invitation.*

**Conservative Student Union**  
43 Old National Post Road, Suite 604  
Northfield, MN 55057  
507.555.1212

January 30, 2015

The Honorable Joe Smith  
3000 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Smith,

The Conservative Student Union at St. John's College wishes to invite you to speak on our campus on the topic, "Saving Social Security."

We wish to host this program sometime before final exams begin on our campus on May 3. Any weekday before that date, with the exception of our spring break March 3-10, would be an excellent time to host such a program.

Our group extends this invitation to you because we are convinced that a speech by an individual of your prominence, background, and expertise would be the best way to educate our campus and our community about the dangers of doing nothing to reform Social Security. Because of this, we have extended this invitation only to you.

If you are able to accept our invitation we would be happy to pay all your transportation, food, lodging, and incidental expenses. Furthermore, we have a commitment that our college president, Mr. John Bank, will attend your speech.

The Minneapolis/St. Paul public television station has agreed to videotape your speech for later broadcast, and there has been interest in covering the speech by several local newspaper columnists.

We know from previous experience that at least 250 people will attend the program.

We hope you will consider our invitation favorably, and thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,



Mary Smith  
President  
St. John's College  
Conservative Student Union

### 3. Filling the speaker's schedule

After a speaker has accepted your invitation, find out how much of his time will be available for other activities. Then try to schedule his time in order to get the maximum benefit from his visit.

If the invited speaker has the time, you can expand his visit into a full day of events.

Do not commit the speaker to any additional activities until he or his staff has approved them.

Typical extra activities can include:

- An exclusive interview with the campus radio station or newspaper
- Lecturing to a class
- Informal talks with students in the Student Union or wherever students congregate
- Meetings and interviews with student government and campus leaders to learn their concerns

#### Schedule for Scotty Robb Day at Oklahoma University

Monday, October 23

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 7:30 a.m.  | Meet in front of Kate Center cafeteria   |
| 7:35 a.m.  | Breakfast with students  |
| 8:00 a.m.  | Class with Dr. Morris at Adams Hall. Topic: "The Advertising Medium and Political Campaigns"                     |
| 9:00 a.m.  | Meet with David Burr, OU Vice President (Special Assistant to President Banowsky)                                |
| 9:20 a.m.  | Greet students between Dale Hall and the Physical Sciences Center (Accompanied by OU Conservative Club students) |
| 9:40 a.m.  | Meet with Major Bane, Army ROTC Assistant Commander, at Armory   |
| 10:00 a.m. | Live radio interview with Tim Granahan, KGOU, in Kaufman Hall  |
| 10:30 a.m. | Meet with USAF ROTC Commander Col. Varley in Air Force Building  |
| 11:00 a.m. | Meet students in front of Dale Hall  |
| 12:15 p.m. | Lunch with students at Couch Hall  |
| 1:00 p.m.  | Start for Armory   |
| 1:10 p.m.  | Arrive at the Armory   |
| 1:30 p.m.  | Speech at the Armory on "The Truth About Our POW/MIAs"   |
| 3:00 p.m.  | Interview with Andy J. Rieger, Editor of the Oklahoma Daily  |

Also, visits to Student Union to meet with students and staff and Ellison Hall to meet with Student Government leaders.

*Actual schedule for former POW Scotty Robb at the University of Oklahoma. For weeks prior to the big day, university conservative activists plastered the campus with posters and announcements about the visit.*



*Example of Operation Hometown*

- Discussions, receptions, or meals with club members (very important to build enthusiasm)
- Interviews with local newspapers and appearances on local TV programs or talk radio shows
- Operation Hometown – Arrange to have photographs taken of the speaker with club activists. Separate club members by hometown. When the speaker has a free moment, take casual photos of each group with the

## Helpful tip:

Some school reporters are not well versed enough in public policy issues to be able to ask intelligent questions.

In advance you could provide reporters with lists of typical questions which might be asked. Make it clear they are only suggestions which may be used if desired.

Many opportunities for creative activity surround public appearances. Advance men for the late President John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign regularly set up flimsy barricades at airports, ostensibly to hold back the crowds.

Crowds assembled behind the barricades. Aides posing as members of the crowd would push over the flimsy barriers at the moment the candidate arrived, allowing the crowd in a "spontaneous demonstration of enthusiasm" to surge forward and greet the candidate. All the while, TV cameras were recording the dramatic scene for the evening news.

These ideas may be applied to other campus programs and not just your major events. Give every event you host an air of excitement.

speaker and mail or email them, with appropriate identifying captions, to each group's hometown papers. Photos of local people with important public officials are almost irresistible to many local newspaper editors.



*Police use a human barricade at a JFK rally.*



*Stage decorations add legitimacy to your event.*

## 4. Physical arrangements

Even though you may wisely have reserved an undersized room, it is a good idea to set up fewer chairs than there is space for. Store extra chairs in an adjacent room or in the back of the meeting room. As the room begins to fill, set up additional chairs as necessary. This assures that every seat will be filled, starting with the front rows.

When appropriate, decorate the room brightly with crepe paper, balloons, and posters.



Ask your speaker if he has any Audio/Visual requirements. Common AV requirements include:

- Projector
- Screen
- Laptop for flashdrive plug-in
- Internet access for videos or email
- Microphone (handheld/lapel)
- Audio speakers
- Extra microphone for Q & A

Find out if he prefers to speak at a lectern and if he wants a lectern microphone (if a sound system is necessary). Wireless microphones are nice for speakers who like more freedom to walk around.



*Steve Horowitz speaking to the Young Americans for Liberty chapter at University of Michigan.*

### Helpful tip:

Always hang your group's banner directly behind the speaker to ensure maximum group exposure.

Reserve a section in the back for the media, and make sure someone responsible gets the names of the reporters who do come.

Live or recorded music helps to build spirit and enthusiasm, particularly as the crowd files in.

Make arrangements for an American flag on stage. You should also provide a pitcher of ice water and a glass for the speaker. For a major event, or even a smaller, formal event, have someone offer an invocation and someone else lead the Pledge of Allegiance.



*The designated media section at CPAC 2015.*



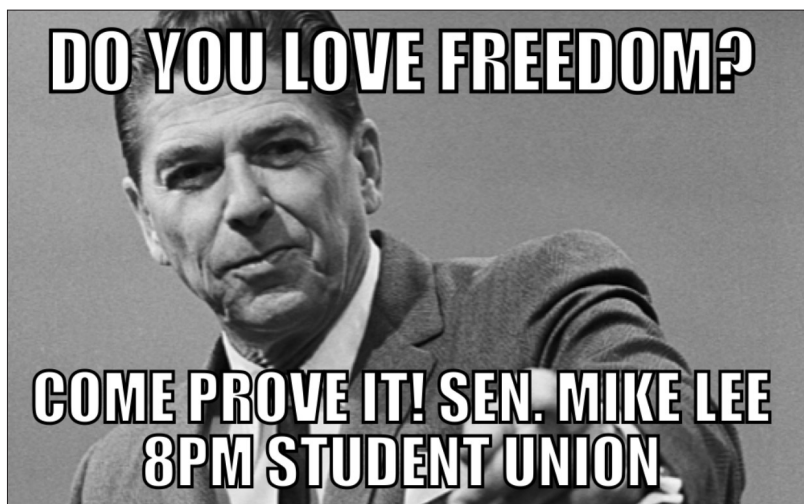
*Remember to make arrangements for an American flag on stage.*

# Drawing a Crowd

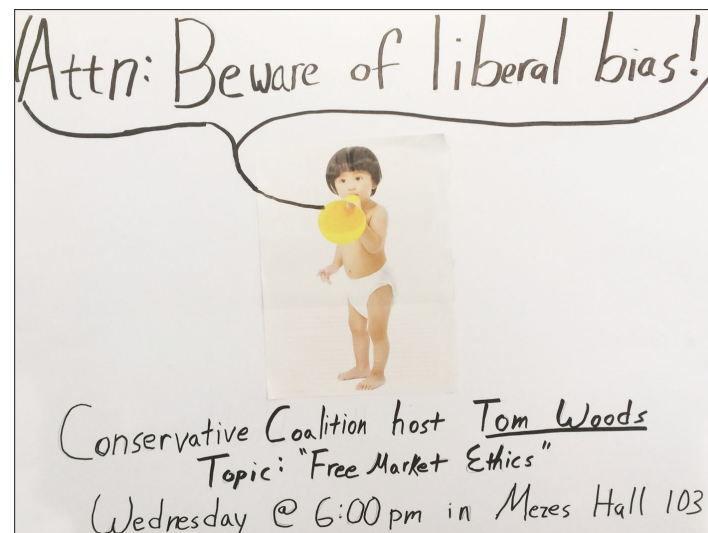
You can do many specific things to attract a crowd, but remember the most important fundamentals: Select an interesting program and spread the information regarding the event.

## 1. Cost-effective advertising

- ✓ Write and print up a flyer and send a campus-wide email inviting all students to attend, with bullet points explaining why they will benefit from attending. Place this flyer under every dormitory door the night before the meeting. Distribute this flyer by hand in student parking areas as commuter students arrive on campus.
- ✓ Write a “Dear Faculty Member” letter announcing the meeting and explaining why it is important and why students ought to attend. Ask the faculty member to announce the time and place of the meeting in class. Place these letters, signed by a faculty member or student leader, in every faculty member’s campus mailbox.
- ✓ Avoid paid advertising. Take advantage of every possibility of public service announcements and earned publicity. Usually paid advertising is not cost effective and should be used only by campus speakers committees which are not on tight budgets.
- ✓ Handmade posters are much more effective on campus than printed posters. Once a person reads one printed poster, he may ignore all the others. Handmade posters or memes, if clever, will each be read.



*Example of a meme used to promote a public program via social media outlets*



*Example of a balloon poster used to promote a public program*

## **2. Personal outreach**

- ✓ Many students will come if asked by a fellow student as a personal favor. If your club has developed a canvass system to identify and mobilize supportive students, every floor leader should invite every supporter and uncommitted student on his floor.



*Quarter sheet flyers advertising the event should be handed directly to students rather than posted on bulletin boards.*

- ✓ Make personal visits to professors in departments such as speech, economics, and government, and ask them to announce your program in class. Tailor your presentation to the particular interest of the professor. Sometimes teachers will agree to give extra credit to students who write analyses of the content or style of the speech. You should suggest this.
- ✓ Certainly the supportive local party organizations should be invited. This would include party committees and their affiliated groups such as auxiliaries for high school students, women, and ethnic groups.

## **3. Media outreach**

- ✓ Notify local journalists on and off campus, including broadcast and print media, about the event. Be sure your story is submitted well in advance of any press deadline. Personally follow-up your press releases with a phone call.
- ✓ Personally invite local print and broadcast media with a phone call a few days before your program. Similarly, invite any non-hostile, local political bloggers. This is a helpful way to remind them of the event. Even if they are unable to send personnel to cover the event, if made aware of the program, they will be more receptive to subsequent news releases.



- ✓ A show of interest among the public may also spark media interest if citizens call them asking for details of the event. To help show this interest, have friends call media outlets and ask for information.

## Helpful tip:

Assign someone to post on Facebook and live tweet the event.

- ✓ Many media outlets will not report on the event, but they may print an announcement of the event in their paper if it is open to the public. Many universities and colleges now cater to local residents and non-students and encourage them to attend public forums or seminars featuring guest speakers on campus.

## 4. Coalition outreach

- ✓ Many other clubs may be interested in the topic. For instance, if the program will include a discussion of agricultural policy, the Future Farmers of America would be interested. If the commercialization of space will be addressed, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and other engineering groups should be contacted, etc. Make sure other clubs know early enough to put notices in their newsletters and on their bulletin boards.
- ✓ Co-sponsoring a program with one or more organizations can sometimes help swell a crowd. But this should be done only if having co-sponsors will actually increase the crowd or media coverage. Be wary of having a bunch of do-nothings share your credit while providing nothing in return. Don't forget to invite allied groups from other campuses.



## 5. Social media outreach

- ✓ Create a Facebook event page and ask everyone involved to invite their online network to attend. You can share the link to the event page on other student group Facebook pages and local conservative pages inviting them to attend and spread the word.
- ✓ Share the link to the event page on Twitter using hashtags that will reach your local target demographic.
- ✓ Consider sharing your event on Snapchat. Although this won't get you national attention, Snapchat may share it locally.

Example of a group's event page for a public program



## 6. Concluding thoughts on outreach

- ✓ Controversy draws a crowd. Don't worry if your opponents chalk up the sidewalks denouncing your speaker; open opposition creates student interest.
- ✓ Some who disagree with your speaker can be specially invited too, unless they are likely to be truly disruptive.



*Controversy draws a crowd.*

### Helpful tip:

Be ready with a smartphone or video camera to catch protesters in action.



*Controversy multiplies the impact of a public program on campus.*

# Managing the Public Program

## 1. Before the program begins

Lighting is often a big problem at public programs.

Your speaker should stand in the best-lit place in the room. Sometimes you will have to rent a spotlight which will beam at him over the heads of the audience.

Always hang a group banner behind speaker to maximize group exposure and to get good photos.

- Never place a speaker in front of a window through which light is shining behind him.
- Never place a speaker in front of a mirror which will reflect back lights from elsewhere in the room.
- Never place a speaker in front of a turned-on light affixed to the wall behind him.

Designate some people as ushers to oversee seating, answer questions, and distribute program or campaign flyers (if any). The ushers should also be on the lookout for hostile elements which might try to disrupt your public program.

### Helpful tip:

If you know that there will be opposition, notify the speaker beforehand.



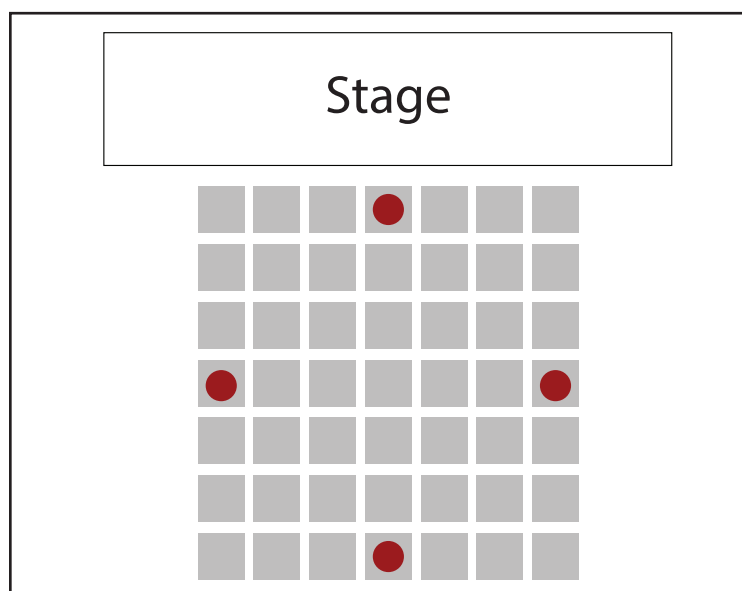
*Liberal protesters disrupt former Congressman Tom Tancredo at University of North Carolina.*

Where hecklers are likely, have many of your own group members arrive early, slip in, and seat themselves among the hecklers. This is not to confront or argue with them. Your people's presence prevents the formation of solid blocks of hecklers and dampens their group spirit.

Regardless of your ultimate hopes for the event, don't call it a "rally" in your publicity materials. The word "rally" creates the expectation of a highly charged, packed event which is difficult to create. If a speech turns into a rally, so much the better, but raising expectations beforehand is not a good idea. Under-promise and over-perform.

An old audience organization technique which is universally successful and not widely known is the diamond seating pattern. Four sharp people should be briefed beforehand to seat themselves in a diamond pattern in the audience. That is, one in the middle of the front row, one half way back on the extreme right, one halfway back on the extreme left, and one in the middle of the back row.

In most speeches, there are pauses where applause is appropriate. The job of these four people is to look for these places and to applaud vigorously at the appropriate times. People seated in the audience are thus caught up in the obvious enthusiasm of the people around them. This technique can make even an average presentation into an outstanding success.



*The red dots indicate the placement of people in the audience for the diamond seating pattern.*

Another person should be designated to photograph the event. The photos may be useful for your publicity. And the frequent flashing of a camera strobe lends an air of drama and importance to the arrival, departure, and presentation of the speaker. Bright video camera lights turned on the moment the speaker enters heightens this effect.

Another person should be appointed to manage the social media for the event. This person should tweet important lines from the speech and post pictures of the event. This will help create a buzz about the event.

## ***2. Introducing the speaker***

Do not be casual with your choice of who is to introduce your speaker. Have some competent person prepare a formal, lively introduction.

The introducer must understand the audience has come to hear the speaker and not the introducer. Therefore the introduction itself should almost never be more than three minutes long. A good formula to use for a lively short introduction is the T.I.P.:

- Topic – what is the theme of this program?
- Importance – why should you be interested in this theme?
- Person – who is our speaker and why should you care what he has to say on this topic?

The master of ceremonies should start the program only a little late. If you wait for late arrivals, those people who arrived on time will lose their enthusiasm. Usually, when



programs are delayed in hope of drawing a larger crowd, no one else shows up. This devastating occurrence can be prevented by starting not more than 10 minutes later than the advertised time.

Be sure the master of ceremonies encourages the audience to interact with the event via social media. Remind them of the event's hashtag.

### ***3. The program***

Have one or two group leaders brief your speaker on local “hot topics” among the students. A brief comment in the speaker's opening remarks about “your exciting victory in last Saturday's football game” will go a long way toward creating a bond with the student audience.

For the convenience of the speaker, you should reserve a nearby room with a bathroom and give him 15-20 minutes alone before the presentation to freshen up and work on his notes.

For a student audience, 20 to 40 minutes is a good length for the presentation.

### ***4. Questions***

At most public programs, students expect to be able to ask questions. If the speaker is really good, this will be his chance to shine and to win many converts. You'll probably want to allocate another 30 minutes or so for questions. The timing and format should be announced at the beginning of the question period.

There is no one best way to handle questions. It depends on many factors: the topic, the

student interest, and the local circumstances. If the questioning is likely to be very lively, a firm, tough moderator should be named to keep the program orderly and save the invited speaker or candidate from having to be the “heavy” with any rude people in the audience.

Possible ways to handle questions are:

- Audience asks questions by standing where they are (moderator should repeat questions so everyone can hear)



*A speaker takes questions from students during a public program.*



- Audience goes to one or more fixed locations to ask questions at a microphone
- Roving moderators with wireless microphones select questioners from the audience (moderator should always hold the mic for the audience member)
- Audience submits written questions to moderator (less spontaneity)
- A panel of experts or reporters asks the questions (better on technical topics and can also mix in audience questions)

Be respectful of the opposition, especially while holding the microphone.

Always prepare for the potential of a hostile crowd during the Q & A. Prepare in advance to have audience members with predetermined questions. To identify these friendly audience members to the moderator, provide them with, say, a red pen.

Some thought should be given before the program as to which questions may or should be asked of the speaker. You should never try to limit the discussion to only planted questions, but there are a few reasons to prepare a few questions in advance.

- It helps direct the discussion to areas of importance, especially when the questions have strayed down irrelevant paths.
- It prevents the speaker from coincidentally taking only hostile questions and thereby appearing to have no support in the audience.
- In the opposite extreme, if the audience is largely favorable, it gives him a chance to show his stuff by giving good answers to tough questions, especially if you already know he has a good answer to a question.

## 5. Documentation

If the crowd does get rowdy with leftist protestors, or you see university leadership working against your program, be prepared. Document and prosecute civil violations and criminal actions.

LI has connected dozens of students with help and pro-bono legal assistance -- dozens of students have used the legal system to hold their campus accountable, change policy, and have been awarded thousands of dollars in damages and attorney fees.


**CAMPUS REFORM**

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**LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

## Oregon State pays \$101,000 in legal fees, damages to settle lawsuit over junked conservative papers

*Leadership Institute's Campus Reform reports student victims awarded legal fees and damages.*

Ge  
Ca  
up

To make the best case possible, record your events and save all event planning documents, emails, and videos. Be polite and stay calm under all circumstances. Contact LI for help finding legal counsel.

## ***6. The recruitment opportunity***

One of the world's most common and most serious political blunders is to spend hundreds of hours preparing a huge political rally only to let it come and go without ever getting the names and contact information (phone number, email address, and mailing address) of those in attendance.

### **Helpful tip:**

Post photos on the event's page the night of the event. Send a thank you email to attendees with a link to the photos and upcoming events.

You may not be able to do extensive recruiting at all public programs, but you should almost always make some attempt to do so.

You should also have a membership table clearly visible before and after the program so that students who want more information may talk with your club members. You'll find this a great way to recruit new members. The table should be located just outside or next to the door.

Pass around sign-up sheets or ask people to sign in at the front door.

If the event is a political rally, it can be expected that most of those present are supporters. The list from such a rally will be an extremely valuable source of new members or volunteers for future activities.

Of course, if the speaker is willing to endorse your group and its activities at some point in the program, that will encourage interest.

Even programs which are not yours can be a source of new members. Note the questions asked, and speak with the sympathetic questioners after the program.

As soon as the event has ended, wrap up by informing the audience they have the option to take a photo with the speaker on stage, in front of your strategically placed banner. If possible, use a professional camera. Ask the audience not to use their phone cameras to save time.

# After the Event - Capitalizing Through Publicity

During the event, note which reporters came and which media outlets are represented, so you can get publicity to the others after the event.

For the newspapers, post-event releases summarizing the event and the speaker's points can be helpful. At the next group meeting have people write letters-to-the-editor about the event to increase the exposure. An especially good writer could author an opinion piece on



## Helpful tip:

Set a donation jar on the check-in table.

## Helpful tip:

Be sure your phone or recording device is charged and has enough memory.

some aspect of the event and ask that it be printed in either the school or a local newspaper.

Radio stations are actually the easiest to interest. Use a phone or tablet to capture the speech and extract a 15-30 second segment of a forceful statement by the speaker (preferably followed by vigorous applause). You may also interview the speaker after the event and take a clip from there. Then call the radio station and offer them a "radio actuality."

Most radio station news rooms have the ability to record audio segments directly off the phone and replay them in their hourly news summaries. By using a segment you give them over the phone or by email, they can appear to have covered the event without ever sending a reporter.

If the speaker has a few extra moments, many stations will record a short interview over the phone. A group member can screen stations in advance to find out who

is interested in one of the above options.

Be sure to keep all clippings and a record of whatever broadcast publicity you do receive from the media. Many printed articles can be useful as reprints. Send copies of good clippings to your donors.



# Conclusion



**Send the speaker a hand-written Thank You note from the group.**

You'll want to do your best, but realize that no public program is perfect. Very few public programs will be able to utilize all the techniques outlined in this manual. Do not attempt to do more than your available manpower and resources can accomplish.

Although there is some risk from the bad publicity if a public program flops, the enormous benefits in building enthusiasm, recruiting, educating, and carrying your message to the public make the effort well worthwhile.

# Resources

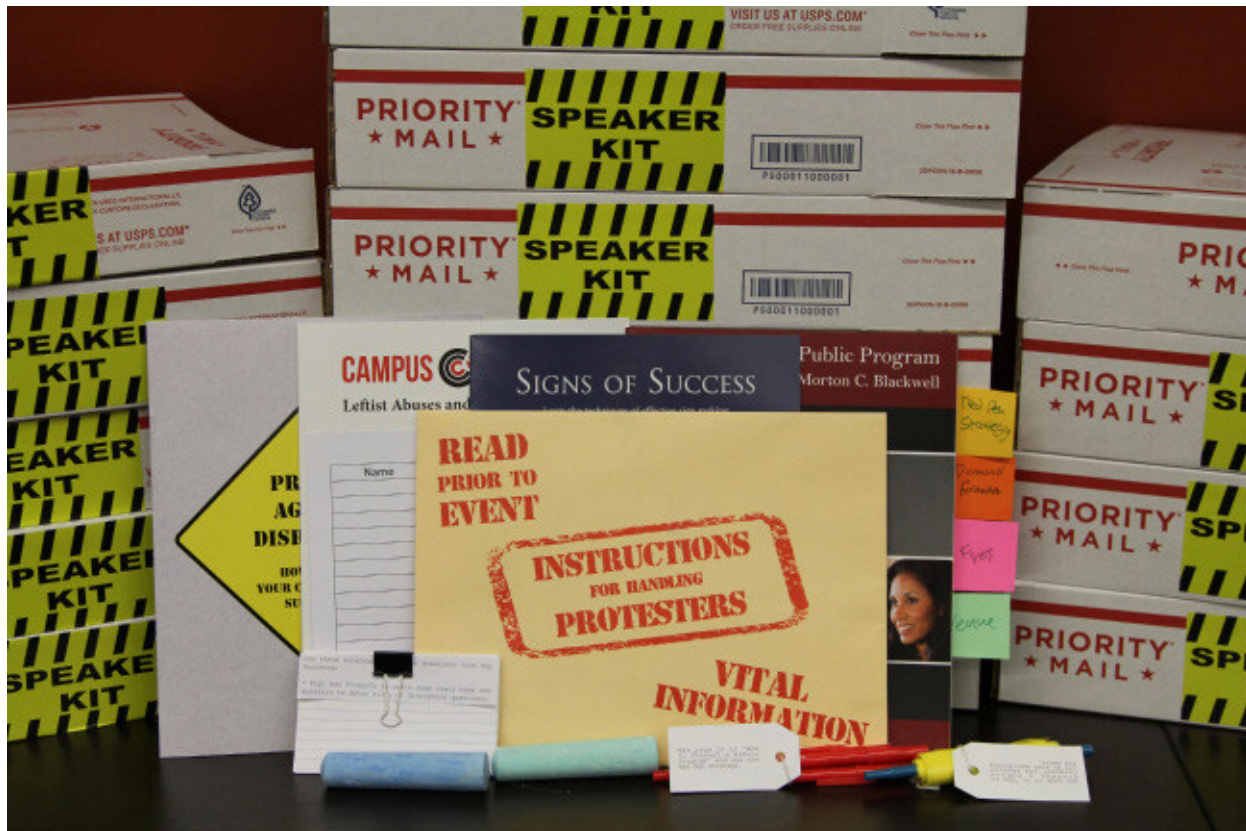
Get help with your next campus public program.

At [LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus](https://LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus) you can:

- Request a speaker grant
- Apply for a speaker kit
- Find a speaker
- Join LI's nationwide network
- And much more

For more guidance and on the ground support, contact your Leadership Institute Regional Field Coordinator at [LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus/Map.cfm](https://LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus/Map.cfm).

You can find more information on how LI can help you succeed on campus at [LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus](https://LeadershipInstitute.org/Campus).



*You can order a speaker kit today.*

# Morton C. Blackwell

Professionally, Morton Blackwell is the president of the Leadership Institute, a non-partisan educational foundation he founded in 1979.

In youth politics, Mr. Blackwell was a College Republican state chairman and a Young Republican state chairman in Louisiana.



He served on the Young Republican National Committee for more than a dozen years, rising to the position of Young Republican National Federation national vice chairman at large.

Off and on for five and a half years, 1965-1970, he worked as executive director of the College Republican National Committee under four consecutive College Republican national chairmen.

Having worked actively in politics for more than fifty years, he has probably trained more political activists than any other conservative. Starting in the 1960s, he has trained thousands of people who have served on staff for conservative candidates in every state.

Mr. Blackwell was Barry Goldwater's youngest elected delegate to the 1964 Republican National Convention in San Francisco.

He was a national convention Alternate Delegate for Ronald Reagan in 1968 and 1976, and a Ronald Reagan Delegate at the 1980 national convention.

In 1980, he organized and oversaw the national youth effort for Ronald Reagan.

He served as Special Assistant to the President on President Reagan's White House Staff 1981-1984.

First elected to the Arlington County (Virginia) Republican Committee in 1972, he is a member of the Virginia Republican state central committee and was first elected in 1988 as Virginia's Republican National Committeeman (RNC), a post he still holds.



# About Leadership Institute

## The Leadership Institute Trains Conservatives

Founded in 1979 by its president, Morton C. Blackwell, LI provides training in campaigns, fundraising, grassroots organizing, youth politics, and communications. The Institute teaches conservatives of all ages how to succeed in politics, government, and the media.

The Institute offers 55 types of training schools, workshops, and seminars; a free employment placement service; the campus news website, [CampusReform.org](http://CampusReform.org); and a national field program that trains conservative students to organize campus groups.

Since 1979, LI has trained more than 289,563 conservative activists, leaders, and students. The Institute has a nationwide network of more than 2,639 affiliated conservative and libertarian campus groups and newspapers.

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Activists, and Leaders Since 1979**