

Vol. 48 / No. 2 BACK TO SCHOOL 2015

CAMPUS ACTIVITIES **Programming**[®]

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

**NACA[®] VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:
GET INVOLVED!**

Don't You Deserve a Middle Agent?

POSITIVE SCHOOL/AGENT RELATIONSHIPS

Understanding the Hospitality Rider

DEALING WITH DIVAS

Making Social Media Work for You

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Cross Boundaries to Build a Better Future

By Glenn Farr

@EditorGlennNACA



UNTIL I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD, my family lived in a small rental house on a slight rise near a rural highway. Near the end of our long driveway lived an African-American family with whom, to my memory, we did not interact. Yet, I have an early memory of playing outside one evening and noticing through a kitchen window in the other house two colorfully dressed women, laughing as they set the table for supper. I found them fascinating and began to walk toward their window.

I had moved only a few steps when my mother poked her head out our front door to say, "Don't go down there." There could have been any number of reasons she did that, my general safety upon leaving our yard chief among them; but implicit in her tone, even to my young ears, was the subtext, "They're not like us."

In sixth grade, my best friend was a kid named Mark – smart, funny and imaginative, and something of a class clown. I remember telling another boy that Mark was my best friend that year, to which he replied, "He can't be your best friend because he's a" And he dropped the N-bomb.

In high school, my best friend turned out to be a guy who, although white like me, had lived all over the world due to his father's air force career. In addition, his mother was British and reminded me of Julie Andrews. I was not only fascinated with her, I was enthralled by their stories of life in England, Spain, Germany and a few other places their travels had taken them. My father made some sort of vague comment about not understanding why anyone would want to live in all those foreign places.

In a previous job, I worked with a young doctor who had emigrated from Pakistan. We got along well and I ended up helping him choose a car and learn to drive. Another co-worker was curious as to why I gave him so much of my time, indicating that the local immigrant community could

likely give him the assistance he needed.

As I write this, it is only a week past the shooting of nine people during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC. These nine community and state leaders warmly welcomed a young white man to their meeting, only to lose their lives an hour later as the shooter offered his hate-filled reasons for the action he was taking.

Throughout my life, I have been educated, enlightened, entertained and invigorated by my exchanges with people who are not like me. So, when others express fear or outright hatred toward other groups and retreat into various forms of "tribalism," I just don't get it.

I would hope that my tribe is global.

I've always striven to ensure that by consciously seeking out people who were different from me, whether they were of a different ethnicity or social or educational background, or whether they might be described by any other terms that attempt to define or separate us. An easy way for me to find those kinds of people has been to participate in community activities and organizations, ranging from joining local theatre companies and choral groups and volunteering with social action groups to establishing long-distance friendships with people around the world through social media. These kinds of activities, all of which require volunteer effort of one sort or another, have opened me to many enriching people and experiences.

If you're interested in expanding your global tribe, and enriching your life and career, why not volunteer for NACA? We have two articles in this issue that focus on volunteer opportunities in the Association and how you can find one that fits you. So, volunteer today and cross boundaries to build a better future.

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NACA Saved My Career

By **Brian Gardner** @stl_bg



IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF YEAR! A new class of first-year students has arrived at campuses across the country and a new year of programming and learning is officially underway. But, that's not the only thing that makes this the most wonderful time of year; regional conference season is upon us! As you consider attending one of the six regional conferences that will take place this fall, let me tell you the important role NACA and its programs (specifically, regional conferences) played in my professional career.

I love what I do and I love where I do it. To be able to contribute to the lives of young people on a day-to-day basis is a blessing beyond comprehension. To top that off, I get to do it at my alma mater, which just happens to be one of the fastest-growing universities of the last decade. Great things abound in campus activities and at Maryville University.

But, as I'm sure everyone reading this can relate, it isn't always puppy dogs, rainbows and ice cream.

When I consider my 12-year career at Maryville University, I see the minor ebbs and flows that have occurred throughout that time. There was a period, though, where the valley seemed particularly low. As the Student Involvement Office was going through some significant transitions in leadership and direction, I was struggling with what that meant for my job and, more importantly, my career.

I found myself facing some of the most difficult decisions in my young, professional life. But, more significantly, I found myself questioning whether I was in the right career. I was beginning to question whether I was made for campus activities and if I had the right skill set to continue in the field. I experienced a crisis of confidence, if ever there was one. In the meantime, I was selected to chair the 2010 Mid America Regional Conference Program Committee (RCPC); I would get to fulfill my dream of chairing a regional conference.

It was exactly that experience that saved my career; it was exactly that experience that kept me in campus activities and even in higher education; it was exactly that experience that made me know who I am as a professional; it was exactly that experience that affirmed my calling to higher education.

There are a series of meetings and gathering opportunities related to being the chair of a regional conference that occur throughout the year. Each time I would reach a point of frustration or doubt in my career, a meeting for NACA would take place. As I gathered with my NACA® family and friends, I was reminded of my value and abilities in campus activities. I was reaffirmed as a professional who belonged where I was.

This was all capped off by the experience of the conference itself in Grand Rapids, MI (the site of this year's conference!) and then followed up by the National Convention in February 2011 in St. Louis, where I learned I would be selected to be on the ballot for the Board of Directors election. By the time I walked into the 2011 regional conference, I was on the NACA® Board of Directors and I returned to a peak in my career.

NACA saved my career. The people, the places, the events, the entire Association; I'm here, still here, where I am and experiencing what I'm experiencing, impacting lives and helping people learn – because of NACA.

Think about that as you consider attending a regional conference this fall. While my experience is personal and impactful to me, I firmly believe it is not unique. Hundreds, if not thousands, have had their lives equally impacted by NACA during the past 55 years. Would you join us in Chattanooga, Tulsa, Buffalo, Grand Rapids, Hartford or Spokane over the next few months? You never know how it will impact your students – or you!



By
JESSICA WILSON
Valparaiso University (IN)

Volunteering for NACA yields many benefits - from the professional to the personal. And the variety of opportunities available allows you to spend as much, or as little time, volunteering as you like.

We each should invest in our own professional development and build a network of relationships in our respective areas. That is why I am proud to say I volunteer with the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA). Working in student affairs and, more specifically, student activities, professionals like me need to be informed about issues that can affect our work and entertainment that can enhance our students' college experiences. We must be apprised of the latest risk management issues and the needs of the student body, which requires professionalism. (But that doesn't mean we can't have fun!)

NACA gives professionals, agencies and students the ability to stay up to date on all the issues and opportunities that are available to us and provides a network of support on which we can capitalize. The Association provides members with the knowledge and resources to promote student learning through engagement in campus activities and has

developed six core values to support its mission (<http://naca.ws/1HWL8Yo>):

- Stewardship
- Innovation
- Communication
- Respect
- Learning
- Inclusivity

By focusing on these values, NACA gives us the tools to tap into important aspects of student development and create opportunities for our students and ourselves to excel in all we do. Whether you have been in the field for 20 years or you are an undergraduate, first-time programmer, NACA has opportunities for you to enhance your experience, build your

résumé, make new connections and help shape the future of the Association. All you have to do is volunteer.

When I was a new professional, I did not really know anyone else in the field. I did not seek a master's degree in higher education and, therefore, had not developed many connections. When I attended my first NACA® regional conference, I felt a little overwhelmed as I tried to make the most of the experience for my students and me. Nevertheless, I knew the best way to deal with my trepidation was to jump right in, so I signed up to be an on-site volunteer.

While volunteering, I asked questions and sought out resources, which quickly helped me learn how valuable NACA was (and still is), how willing my peers were to connect and what a wide range of opportunities NACA had to offer me! Last fall, I served as the Volunteer Center Coordinator for the NACA® Mid America Regional Conference and I could not be happier with my time in the position. I worked with some inspirational professionals, gained a great experience, and enjoyed the process so much I will be doing it all again this fall.

Having now served on the Regional Conference Program Committee, I can tell you how much time and dedication it takes to deliver a great conference experience for delegates and how valuable volunteers truly are to that process. For example, did you know it takes about 2,000 hours to plan a regional conference? Did you know it takes about 30 volunteers to plan that conference and another 100 on-site volunteers to make it run smoothly? Did you know that only about 25 percent of member schools have staff and students who are active NACA® volunteers? That is simply not enough!

I realize our lives are busy and we are all adhering to the "do more with less" philosophy, but to miss a great opportunity to be part of such a broad and supportive community is wasteful. By volunteering with NACA, you can share your time and talents and create a network of friends who know all too well the struggles you face and who will celebrate your successes right along with you, help plan the fun and interactive conference experience you are seeking and build your résumé with new experiences! Here are some ways in which you can get involved!

NACA: Telling Our Story Why We Volunteer



JOLENE CHEVALIER
*Vice President for
College Sales
Event Resources Presents,
Inc. (WI)*

After seven years as an associate member, I continue to attend NACA® conferences, present educational sessions, and write articles for *Campus Activities Programming®* Magazine because I want today's students to feel as excited and enthusiastic about campus programming as I did when I was in college. I had great mentors, both as a college student and as a young professional, who provided me with excellent opportunities and made me passionate about this industry. The more we educate (and positively influence) the next generation of music consumers and professionals, the better off entertainment, the concert experience, and this industry in general will be in the future! Everything is cyclical. It's amazing how many student NACA® attendees I run into years later who are now advisors, agents, tour managers, etc.



JESSE FORD
*Assistant Director,
Multicultural Student Affairs
University of Miami (FL)*

As an assistant director of multicultural student affairs, I do not always get the opportunity to provide programs to the general student body. Many of the programs I coordinate are designed with a cultural focus and NACA gives me an opportunity to see what campus programming looks like on many campuses. NACA has provided me a network of colleagues to connect with and has also provided me with opportunities to publish a number of articles as a new professional. Anyone who is interested in expanding their horizons and diversifying their campus activities experience should volunteer with NACA. The Association also provides professional conferences and a number of other professional development opportunities for its members.



JOE LIZZA, MAEd
*Assistant Director,
Campus Center Operations
& Programs
Stockton University (NJ)*

My involvement with NACA has benefited me in numerous ways professionally, from allowing me to network with colleagues and professional performers from around the country to providing me the opportunity to lead a large group of dedicated volunteers while working in a collaborative environment to create a conference experience that is second to none. As a student leader, my NACA® involvement allowed me to experience the field in a different manner than what I would have experienced through on-campus involvement exclusively, or just attending NACA® events as a delegate. The experiences and relationships from this involvement solidified my desire to pursue a career in student affairs and higher education.



AMMA MARFO
*Assistant Director of Student
Activities Involvement and
Assessment/Coordinator for
Commuter Student Life
Emmanuel College (MA)*

Volunteering with NACA has given me the opportunity to develop skills that will drive my career forward. I have had the chance to work with people I had met in hallways and session rooms, learning from their experiences and perspectives. I have gotten an inside look at the brilliance of professionals, associates and students educating our membership. And I have built relationships that will follow and enrich me for years to come. I have loved my time volunteering with NACA, and I hope you will, too!

Would you like to share your story of how NACA® involvement has benefited you, your institution or agency? Contact Glenn Farr at glennf@naca.org and look for "your story" in upcoming editions of the electronic version of NACA® Spotlight.

Short-Term Involvement

From participating as an on-site volunteer at a conference or National Convention to writing an article for this very magazine or presenting a webinar, there are many ways you can get involved with NACA that do not require many hours of your time.

For example, as an on-site volunteer at a conference, you

can help with registration check-in, take meal tickets, check name badges or perhaps review an educational session. These opportunities are quick and easy and provide you with a chance to help make the conference run smoothly. You also get the opportunity to work with students and professionals from other institutions who have signed up to help, as well.

Why not share what you know, have learned or are experiencing with others from the field? By writing for *Campus Activities Programming*® magazine, you have the opportunity to become a published writer and have your article read by peers from the Association's more than 900 member institutions! This is a great way to invest in the resources NACA provides and influence the field by sharing your perspectives and experiences with students and staff from across the nation. With eight issues published each year, *Campus Activities Programming*® magazine offers many valuable opportunities for you to contribute. (Contact Editor Glenn Farr at glennf@naca.org to get started.)

Another way to help NACA provide useful resources to all its members is by presenting a webinar. These take very little time away from your busy schedule and provide you with the opportunity to share your knowledge and connect with students and staff members who may need assistance or knowledge in an area in which you and/or your institution excel. By sharing your experience and knowledge this way, you provide another valuable resource for others and help NACA uphold its core values of learning, communication and innovation. (Contact Morgan Grant at morgang@naca.org for more information.)

Long-Term Involvement

If you have a little more time to give or want to be involved more extensively in NACA, there are even more opportunities for you. If you have a few days to a week to offer, you can serve on a regional or national Showcase Selection Committee or be a member of the Showcase Stage Crew

at a conference or the National Convention. If you'd like a longer-term involvement, you can serve for a year or more to help plan an NACA® Institute, a regional conference or the National Convention, or even become a member of the Board of Directors.

We Need You!

There are all sorts of roles and responsibilities involved in keeping NACA, its 10 summer Institutes, eight Regional Conferences, National Convention, numerous webinars and eight magazine issues going. And this work cannot be done solely by the 20-something full-time employees in the NACA® Office. NACA needs new professionals, seasoned professionals, student programmers, graduate assistants and talent agents to be a part of the process and share their time and talents so NACA can continue to evolve alongside our students and institutions.

To learn more about opportunities for involvement, visit the NACA website at www.naca.org. Click on "Member Resources" and you will see a link to the "How to Volunteer" page on the right. There you will find all the information you need to get involved. Take a look today, then reach out to

Laura Jeffcoat, Coordinator of Volunteer Leadership Services, at lauraj@naca.org, telephone: 803-217-3489. If you have questions about any positions that interest you, she should be able to help you.

Also, keep an eye out for email updates, notices in the NACA® *Spotlight* electronic newsletter and notices at your regional conferences and the National Convention so that you know what opportunities are available to you, your colleagues and your students. Volunteering opens the door to a new network of friends, builds your résumé and is also a lot of fun. So, don't miss out on all that volunteering has to offer. Sign up now!

FROM PARTICIPATING AS AN ON-SITE VOLUNTEER AT A CONFERENCE OR NATIONAL CONVENTION TO WRITING AN ARTICLE FOR THIS VERY MAGAZINE OR PRESENTING A WEBINAR, THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN GET INVOLVED WITH NACA THAT DO NOT REQUIRE MANY HOURS OF YOUR TIME.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jessica Wilson is Assistant Director of Student Activities at **Valparaiso University (IN)**, where she also earned a bachelor's degree in psychology. She holds a master's degree in business administration from Purdue University North Central (IN). In NACA, she has served as the NACA® Mid America Volunteer Center Coordinator, as well as the NACA® Seminar for New Professionals Coordinator in 2011-12.



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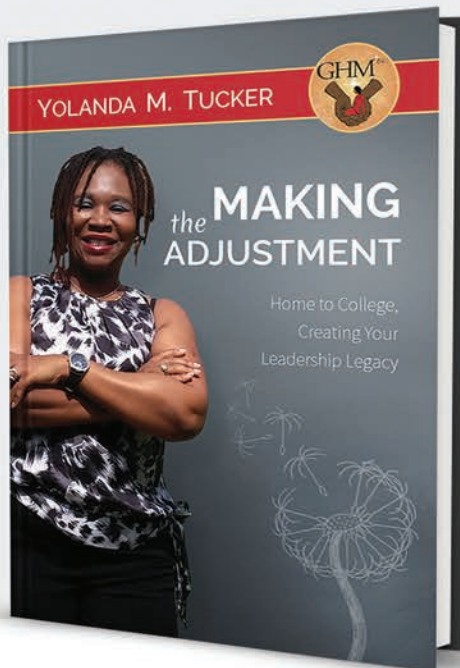
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Antjuan Williams, African American Student Union President University of North Florida
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Professional Benefits of Volunteering?

But There Are So Many More!

The volunteer roles available through NACA are many, as are the rewards.

By
ALLYSON CRUST
Maryville University of St. Louis (MO)

LOOKING TO CONNECT WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS, students and associates in the field of campus activities? Interested in expanding your repertoire of skills and knowledge? Want to have fun working with a team? Volunteer with NACA! There's something for everyone!

According to Merrill Associates (2006), the "Ten professional development benefits of volunteering" are:

1. Enjoying great networking opportunities
2. Refining and retaining old skills
3. Gathering and developing new skills
4. Practicing skills and knowledge in a low-risk environment
5. Exploring and learning about new career options
6. Experiencing the satisfaction of doing good
7. Enjoying visibility and great connections
8. Being revitalized and energized
9. Developing your leadership style
10. Building your résumé

Why would you want to miss out on any of these great benefits of volunteering? NACA is built on a foundation of passionate volunteers who work tirelessly to improve the

Association and the programs and services it offers. You, too, can be a part of this network of volunteers.

So, Where Do You Start?

If you're looking to get started but aren't quite ready to take on a long-term leadership role, try one of these great, short-term volunteer opportunities:

- **Regional Conference On-Site Volunteer** (student, professional staff, faculty): It takes an army to host a regional conference! Be a part of that army by assisting with Block Booking, serving on the dinner welcome crew, reviewing educational sessions, and more.
- **Regional Conference or National Convention Educational Session Presenter** (student, professional staff, faculty, associate): Share your expertise by submitting a proposal to present an educational session. Still unsure about your presentation skills? Grab a friend and present together!
- **Webinar Presenter** (student, professional staff, faculty, associate): NACA offers outstanding webinars regularly so that students and professionals can continue their education throughout the year. Webinar proposal





Anthony Maly (left), Northeast Missouri State University, Amma Marfo (center), Emmanuel College (MA), and Leona Zona (right), University of Maine-Orono, volunteer at the 2015 NACA® National Convention.

submissions are always open at naca.ws/1M7UKAy. Upon receipt of a proposal submission, an Office staff member will contact the volunteer to discuss the proposal process, which includes review by the Education Advisory Group, and if selected, the Office contact will help with the logistics of scheduling and promoting the webinar.

- **Awards Judge** (student, professional staff, faculty): NACA offers many awards, scholarships, and competitions throughout the year. The Association is always looking for knowledgeable, trustworthy professionals and students to help determine the recipients. Whether it's judging promotional items from program boards or helping to choose the next big scholarship winner, you can get involved by contacting your regional Volunteer Development Coordinator (naca.ws/1deoos5).
- **Showcase Selection** (student, professional staff): You can be a part of helping to choose those fantastic acts that get to showcase at the regional conferences or National Convention. This committee meets for a few days to choose the best submissions for the various showcases at the conferences.

- **Stage Crew** (student): If you're interested in building your production skills and learning what it takes to implement a major production, stage crew is for you. Join a team of other students and professionals seeking to further their technical knowledge, and meet some awesome acts.

If you're looking for a more long-term position that will provide you with enhanced of skills and knowledge and allow you to work with a team of other great volunteers, try one of these great roles:

- **Intern Host** (professional staff, faculty, associate): The NACA® Internship Program provides experiential opportunities in business and college settings for undergraduate and graduate students. Colleges and agencies can host qualified summer interns and provide meaningful work experience. Stay tuned for more information in late fall.
- **Graduate Intern** (graduate students): Graduate Interns provide support for regional conferences and National Conventions by assisting the planning committee with specific responsibilities, such as Block Booking, the Campus Activities Marketplace, and Education and

Professional Development. Interns also communicate regularly with a mentor who assists them in learning about the field of campus activities.

- **Graduate Intern Mentor** (seasoned professional staff): Graduate Intern Mentors are paired with Graduate Interns and convey the importance of professional development through volunteering with NACA and in their career.
- **Leadership Fellow** (new professional staff): Leadership fellows are full-time new professional staff who are members of an underrepresented population. The goal of the Leadership Fellows Program is to become familiar with NACA® governance, programs and professional development opportunities in order to pursue leadership opportunities within the Association in the future.
- **Leadership Fellow Mentor** (seasoned professional staff): Leadership Fellow Mentors work directly with Leadership Fellows to acclimate these individuals into NACA and the field of higher education.
- **Regional Conference Program Committee** (students, professional staff, associates): This group of students, staff and associates plan, organize and implement all aspects of the regional conferences. Each Regional Conference Program Committee (RCPC) ranges in roles and positions to fit the needs of that region. The RCPC has

great opportunities for undergraduate students, graduate students, new and seasoned professionals, and associates!

- **National Convention Program Committee** (professional staff, associates): Similar to the RCPC, the NCPC conducts all tasks in order to carry out a successful National Convention.
- **Institute Staff** (professional staff, graduate students): Institute Staff Members and Coordinators present summer Institute curricula and ensure the success of the Institutes, which currently include the Huge Leadership Weekend, the Programming Basics Institute, the S.P.I.R.I.T. Institute, the Summer Leadership Event at Walt Disney World® Resort, the Concert Management Institute, the Student Organizations Institute, the Student Government Institutes (East and West), the International Experiential Learning Institute and the National Leadership Symposium.
- **National Teams** (professional staff): For more experienced volunteers, you don't have to end your volunteering career with the RCPC or NCPC. For volunteers interested in taking the next step, you can join a team such as the National Volunteer Development Team or National Block Booking Team. These teams, and others like them, are responsible for recommending activities and

How I've Benefitted from Volunteering



SAM AL-KHOURY

*Assistant Director of
Engagement & Activities
University of Washington Bothell*

My role as the NACA® West Education & Professional

Development Coordinator was a phenomenal professional development experience in itself. Professional development funds are tight on campus, but since I am going to NACA anyway as part of my role on campus, it is very easy to justify a little additional time. In this role in particular, I was able to have a significant impact on the conference experience for all of the delegates. I was a committee lead, which meant I supervised other professional staff on the planning team, even before I supervised staff on campus, which was a wonderful opportunity.

Along with my phenomenal team, I was able to shape the educational session offerings to meet the various needs of our region, and also support our region's conference diversity initiatives and professional development programs. I was able to network with other professionals in our field, and have since connected with them on numerous different issues I was facing on campus outside of NACA. I am also glad to learn more about how our professional associations work and how they support us all.

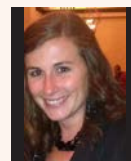


CANDACE H. DEANGELIS

*Associate Director of Student
Center/Activities & New Student
Orientation
Eastern Connecticut State
University*

As the 2014 NACA® Northeast Logistics Coordinator, I learned a great deal about myself and my abilities as a volunteer and a professional, and I also got the chance to connect with so many amazing professionals in the field. Having the opportunity to work with the largest committee in our Northeast volunteer structure allowed me the chance to oversee a large number of volunteers from many different school sizes and types in many different states within our region. I most enjoyed getting to know our newest volunteers, who may have been volunteering for the first time. They provided such interesting perspectives about our conference, and it was very rewarding to hear their opinions and ideas.

Each year, my volunteer roles have allowed me to develop skills I may not have the chance to work on in my role on my campus. Supervising other professionals, programming and planning logistics in a large convention center, and challenging myself to think of new ways to improve our conference each year are just a few of the ways that NACA® volunteering helps me to expand my professional development skills.



TYGER L. GLAUSER

*Assistant Director, Center for
Student Engagement
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville*

I enjoyed serving as the 2014 NACA® South Education & Professional Development Coordinator so much that I have returned to the role for 2015. I learned so much, not just about the responsibilities involved, but also how to be a better leader. The E&PDC must lead educational session selection and must also assist four coordinators in completing their duties. It is rewarding to see the transition for a new volunteer from when they first start out on the committee all the way through the conference.

materials to the Board of Directors that will enhance a certain aspect of the NACA® experience.

- **Board of Directors** (professional staff, faculty): The Board of Directors is the governing body of the Association and the NACA® Foundation, and its members are responsible for the overall strategic direction, effectiveness, and financial stability of the Association.

Finally, serve on a committee that will allow you to do research and provide recommendations to better the Association and improve service to its members:

- **Student Advisory Group** (students): Members of the Student Advisory Group provide input to the Board of Directors regarding issues and opportunities from the student perspective and for providing input on policy issues to the NACA® Office. Students on the SAG need not to be seasoned NACA® volunteers, but they should be familiar with the Association and campus activities.
- **Associate Advisory Group** (associates): Similar to the Student Advisory Group, the Associate Advisory Group works to provide input and perspective to the Board of Directors regarding issues and concerns within the Association. Associates must be familiar with the Association and affiliated with a National Associate

Member company/firm prior to their appointment.

- **Educational Program Review Committees** (professional staff, faculty): These committees exist on the regional and national levels and assist the program committees in reviewing educational sessions after submission and during presentation. The Educational Program Review Committee is a great option for a volunteer looking for experience and skill acquisition, but within a smaller time commitment than required by serving on the program committees.

The beauty of volunteering for an association that relies so heavily on the power of its volunteers is that those volunteers are constantly changing processes and procedures to improve the organization. Volunteer roles are being created and repurposed to fit the needs of the program, service, region and volunteer. The positions highlighted above are just a few of the fantastic experiences offered by NACA. Volunteer roles vary greatly by time commitment required, skills and experience preferred, and more. But there is truly something for everyone. The NACA® website can offer you a more detailed look into all of the opportunities available to interested volunteers (<http://naca.ws/1KcuXJ3>).



CHRIS O'CONNOR

*Director of Student Activities
Campbell University (NC)*

My experience as the NACA® South Student Projects Coordinator has been my

favorite role with NACA so far. It was really fun to get to meet students from several different schools and learn about them and how their organizations work. Student Projects Coordinator is a great role because we get to do so many different things with that team. The thing I am most proud of that our team accomplished last year was that each student on the team met their goals for their role they had set for the conference, and that we all helped each other do that. I learned a lot about how the Association works and what goes on behind the scenes because Student Projects helps out with a little bit of everything.



ELIZABETH RAPOPORT

*Assistant Director of
Student Activities
Carnegie Mellon University (PA)*

Being the 2014 Student Projects Coordinator for NACA® Mid

Atlantic really gave me the opportunity to empower students to be creative and help in the development of the fun NACA® atmosphere. We brainstormed new ways to fundraise, including a hugely successful silent auction, piloted a new "Swappportunity to Network" (which built on the success of the School Swap by including networking round tables), and tried out text message voting for the graphics competition. I gained a lot of experience in balancing brainstorming with the realities of a conference schedule and space limitations, as well as getting people on board with new projects and initiatives. When I look back, this was definitely the most rewarding of my positions on the RCPC and I am so proud of what we accomplished and how we can build upon that in the coming years.

**THE BEAUTY OF
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So Why Volunteer?

NACA Volunteers often share that they volunteer for the benefits of networking, service, idea sharing, professional development, event planning, skills acquired, and just for the FUN experience! Longstanding NACA® volunteers average 10 years of service to the Association – evidence of the personal and professional benefits offered through volunteering. (See sidebar.)

Volunteers have the opportunity to learn about stage production, creating learning outcomes and assessment, managing a team, event planning, time management, leadership, and more! Volunteering with NACA allows you to expand your personal network and acquire new skills and knowledge.

NACA needs your knowledge and expertise to continue growing and thriving and you don't want to miss out on a great experience!

Next Steps?

See something you like here or want to find the perfect match for your skills and interests? Contact your regional Volunteer Development Coordinator to learn more. They can assist you in discovering the perfect volunteer role for you, on a regional or national level! Find the contact information for your Volunteer Development Coordinator at <http://naca.ws/1KTe5oU>.

Also, to stay up to date with upcoming volunteer deadlines, check the weekly NACA® Spotlight electronic newsletter or visit the NACA® website at <http://naca.ws/1KcuXJ3>.

REFERENCES

Merrill Associates. (July 10, 2006). Ten professional benefits of volunteering. Retrieved from: https://charityvillage.com/Content.aspx?topic=ten_professional_development_benefits_of_volunteering#.VW8SrM9Viko

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Allyson Crust is Program Coordinator for Student Involvement at **Maryville University of St. Louis (MO)**.

Active in NACA, she is currently the Volunteer Development Coordinator for the NACA® Mid America Region. She previously served as the region's Block Booking Coordinator and as its Regional Liaison to the NACA® Board of Directors.

In addition, she has served as a Student Member to the Board and was named the Mid America Region's Outstanding Undergrad. She holds a bachelor's degree in organizational leadership from Maryville University and a master's degree in college student personnel from Western Illinois University.

Upcoming Volunteer Application Deadlines

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM SUBMISSIONS

There is still time to submit educational program proposals for the **2016 NACA® National Convention**, the **NACA® Northern Plains Regional Conference** and the **NACA® Mid Atlantic Festival**:

- **NACA® National Convention** – Sept 1, 2015
- **NACA® Northern Plains Regional Conference** – Nov. 3, 2015
- **NACA® Mid Atlantic Festival** – Nov. 3, 2015
- **Webinar Series** – open submission

Visit <http://naca.ws/Lk0c5B> for more information and click the Call for Content link.

NATIONAL POSITIONS

- **Assistant National Volunteer Development Coordinator** application deadline – Aug. 29 (<http://naca.ws/1GncHNs>)

NACA® NORTHERN PLAINS POSITIONS

- **NACA® Northern Plains Educational Session Reviewer** application deadline – Sept. 11 (<http://naca.ws/1MqwI4A>)
- **NACA® Northern Plains Regional Conference Graduate Intern** application deadline – Oct. 1 (<http://naca.ws/1MqwI4A>)
- **NACA® Northern Plains Regional Conference Graduate Intern Mentor** application deadline – Oct. 1 (<http://naca.ws/1MqwI4A>)

*Volunteer position application deadlines occur throughout the year, so keep an eye on the NACA® Spotlight electronic newsletter, Campus Activities Programming® magazine and the NACA® website for application deadline reminders. If you have questions about volunteer opportunities, contact **Laura Jeffcoat, Coordinator of Volunteer Leadership Services**, at LauraJ@naca.org.*


NACA® REGIONAL CONFERENCES OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2015



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For dates, locations, and more, visit www.naca.org



DON'T YOU DESERVE A MIDDLE AGENT?

By
**IOLENE
CHEVALIER,**
Event Resources
Presents, Inc. (WI)

Student delegates meet with a middle agent at the NACA® National Convention.

You might not think you need the services of a middle agent when booking events for your campus, but you might just deserve the knowledge and assistance they bring to the negotiating table.

When I searched for “middle agent” in Google, one of the first links that came up was www.thesaurus.com, which lists “middle person” as the closest match. That sounds close enough – let’s start there.

The site proceeded to define “middle person” as “noun – person who acts as intermediary.” A middle agent in the entertainment world is, in fact, someone who acts as an intermediary between buyers in the entertainment industry and artist representatives. They often represent university and college buyers, helping student activities groups, Greek life and alumni departments, and other campus organizations book, plan and execute large entertainment events.

Scrolling farther down on thesaurus.com, I saw a list of synonyms, which really caught my attention. What struck me is that while the term “middle agent” can often make some people react with skepticism, the synonyms included words like “connection, entrepreneur, fixer, influence, mediator, representative, etc.,” which all have very positive connotations.

May I add a few more terms? How about “educator” and “advocate?”

Although all middle agents have loyal clients who appreciate what they do, there will always be the occasional buyer who feels they are too experienced to use a middle agent, feel irresponsible using their campus dollars on a middle agent, or have heard one nightmare story from a colleague and have been afraid to use middle agents ever since. Years ago, after explaining to someone what I do for a living, it became very evident they had had a bad experience with another middle agent when they literally made a cross with their fingers as if they were warding off a vampire, and slowly backed away. Let’s just say I forever re-worded my elevator pitch after that.

We Can Help

I speak for all middle agents when I say that some of our longest-standing clients have been in their positions for 10-plus years and have worked on hundreds of entertainment events in that time, and yet, they are our most appreciative and loyal clients. We save our clients thousands of dollars every year by finding them routed artists, determining fair pricing, negotiating production elements, and suggesting creative ways to both sell more tickets and save on expenses.

And, for every bad middle agent out there, there is another excellent one who will make up for a bad experience if you are willing to try someone new.

“A good middle agent has insight into the music industry and can help schools find the right performers at the right time for the right price,” said Kate Piper, Student Activities & Involvement Specialist at Illinois State University. “It’s so much more than that, though. As one of the program board advisors at Illinois State University, I’ve been working with a middle agent for the last two years to assist with our concerts.

“While I’ve been in student activities for over a decade, I hadn’t been responsible for advising our concert committee until that point,” she added. “To be honest, I was a little terrified when my supervisor gave me the responsibility. Concerts are very different than most other events, with a variety of moving pieces, bigger financial risk, and more high-profile visibility. Working with a good middle agent has taught me so much, though, about how to manage everything that has to happen in order to host a successful concert, and ISU hosted two very successful concerts in the 2014-2015 academic year.

“I can now say I am more confident in my abilities as a professional due to that relationship,” she continued. “Even with having a more solid foundation, myself, I still see benefits to continuing this partnership in the future. With what we’ve accomplished together so far for the ISU campus community, I’m looking forward to what the future holds,” she concluded.

We Represent YOU

Middle agents represent YOU as the buyer. While many artists have an exclusive live appearance representative that has their best interests in mind, middle agents have the buyer’s best interests in mind. Your middle agent may not always tell you exactly what you want to hear, but they have your school’s long-term interests at heart and can clearly explain all of your options and the consequences of each when you get into a sticky situation.

This is also why agents appreciate middle agents. They help buyers through those sticky situations, answer all their questions, and help better prepare them to host a large-scale concert. They also often work with the same universities and colleges for years, getting to know the nuances of each campus.

We Prepare and Educate

“I value working with good middle buyers, for several reasons,” said Taylor Schultz, the agent responsible for college bookings at Paradigm Talent Agency (CA). “First off, I get to know and trust them implicitly over the years. It is much more difficult to foster these relationships directly with the

school when the student board members and key contacts are turning over each semester or school year. The schools benefit greatly from the trust I place in the middle buyers, their capabilities and judgment.

“Secondly, there is a wonderful educational component to what middle buyers bring to the table. I get worried when a student submits an offer to me with backline as a provision, only for them to ask me afterwards what backline is. When a middle buyer is involved, I know that they will ensure all key elements and stages of show production are in order to give everyone a smooth day of show. I know a good middle buyer will organize the school’s objectives, limitations and desires in a way that makes it easiest for me to deliver the perfect client and show to the school.”

We Keep Tabs on the Entertainment Industry

It is also a middle agent’s job to be aware of hundreds of tours, artist prices, hit singles, other details and more, regardless of what agencies the most popular artists are with. Even the most experienced students and staff simply do not have time to call 10-plus different agencies on a regular basis to fully keep up with all of this. You are already focused on so many other things. Keeping up with tour details, routing, prices and buyer trends is a middle agent’s main focus, as well as providing quick answers and expert advice to clients.

“Each semester the students with whom I work contact our middle agent with a list of recommended artists that they wish to invite to our campus and each time our middle agent immediately responds with helpful and professional advice,” said Trish Neubauer, long-time Coordinator of Student Activities at Luther College (IA). “We rely on their expert opinions, which have served us very well every time. Organizing concerts is challenging, but with our middle agent’s assistance, the students and I look forward to the planning process.”

You Deserve Expert Service

Don’t you deserve quick answers and solid advice? Don’t you deserve an expert on your side? Don’t your students deserve to learn more from their campus event planning experience?

So, remember the terms “fixer,” “representative” and “advocate” and make sure your middle agent is all of these things and more. Think of your middle agent as someone you don’t necessarily need, but someone you most certainly deserve.

References

www.thesaurus.com. Synonyms for middle person. Retrieved May 8, 2015.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jolene Chevalier is Vice President for College Sales at **Event Resources Presents, Inc. (WI)**, where she serves as a middle buyer and entertainment consultant for colleges across the country. She has written for *Campus Activities Programming®* before on the topics of managing the details of major concerts, conducting audience surveys, submitting the perfect offer and developing synergistic programmer and agent relationships.

A high-angle, wide shot of a crowded indoor event, likely a school fair or career expo. The floor is covered with a grey carpet. Numerous people, mostly young adults, are walking through the aisles. On the left, there are several booths. One prominent booth has a large orange and white banner for 'MICHAEL MILLER' with a photo of a man. Another booth has a banner for 'peace mind'. In the background, there are more booths and people, some standing in groups and others walking. The overall atmosphere is busy and social.

PURSuing POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

BETWEEN SCHOOL MEMBERS AND AGENTS

**BY
BERTO CERRILLO
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY-PULLMAN**

WORKING WITH ENTERTAINMENT AGENTS IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES CAN BE A PRODUCTIVE AND ENJOYABLE PROCESS, BUT THERE ARE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MUST BE FULFILLED TO SUPPORT THESE RELATIONSHIPS.

Every day, we receive mail offering opportunities to book a great performer. Sifting through all of it can be maddening because there are just so many agencies, middle agents, self-represented performers and others vying for our attention and our business. It's impossible to work with everyone, and sometimes, it can feel like a bad break up when we have to say "no" to an agent who's been talking to us for weeks about the hypnotist for Mom's Weekend.

Students spend only so much time on the programming board before a new group is being trained and they take over planning the next year's events. With time being of the essence, it's wise to think about developing and sustaining relationships with agents and others so they can give you the best service possible, and in turn, your events will be better than you thought they could be.

I'm not saying you need to spend all of your budget with one agency to develop this relationship. Absolutely not. I am talking about learning skills needed to develop, nurture and grow a relationship by using communication, networking, time management, and some personal organization. To do this, we need to know a few things about the process of working with an agent, as well as the importance of handling this relationship with care.

Opportunities for Professional Development

When thinking about communicating with agents, it can be intimidating. For many students, there is some apprehension about having the full conversation. If that is how you feel, that is OK, and you are not alone. But it gets easier. Look at every conversation with an agent as an opportunity to improve upon who you are. If you think about it, there are many skills you can gain from engaging in the whole conversation with an agent, including:

- Networking (You'll work with multiple agents and agencies throughout the year.)
- Communication (Every email, phone conversation, offer letter is an opportunity.)
- Establishing clear expectations (You have to come to terms on details.)
- Negotiation/compromise (Our budgets can't pay for everything.)
- Creativity (You can learn how to polish an event to make it shine.)
- Decision-making (Sometimes, we have to just choose the path.)
- Collaboration (This is a partnership; we can do this!)
- And so much more!

Few things, if any, are ever learned immediately, so practice is the best way to sharpen these skills. You can walk away at the end of your experience knowing you invested your time wisely and gained skills that will aid in your success in the future. So, don't shy away from this opportunity to improve upon your current skills.

The Agent and the Contracting Process

From the beginning, realize that the job of the agent is to make the process easier for you. Be accessible to them and communicate through email or even a phone call. Here are some tips to follow when reaching out to your first contact:

- Leave or send a detailed message, being sure to include your name and how you can best be reached.
- If you keep office hours, provide the day and times you will be available.
- To help the agent better understand your organization, share its social media profiles. This will help them gauge what you have done in the past and what may be coming forward so they can tailor suggestions.

Getting the Right Price

Working within a budget can make having your dream event challenging at times. Have no fear; if you are prepared, you can make some of that money back by working with your agent. When speaking with an agent, have your dates ready. Identifying and tying into routed dates for an artist will provide the best opportunity to get the best price, but you must remain flexible, as they aren't always available on the days you may be seeking. Working with other institutions in your region (Block Booking or CO-OP Buying, as it was formerly known) is another way to help save in costs, as the performer will get multiple shows but other costs, like travel, would be spread across all institutions on the route. You can ask the agent to help you make contact with those institutions.

When discussing the price with an agent, don't be afraid to negotiate. Be honest about what you can do and where your comfort level is, and see what happens. Most agents will bring all offers to the performer and this means there is a chance. Don't be afraid to provide details about your event. The more you communicate about the nuances involved, the more likely you may hit on a common interest or spark the excitement for the performer to be part of your well-organized and exciting event! Details you could include would be the type of event, whether it's inside or outside, whether merchandise can be sold, and potential attendance, among other details.

Booking the Date

Here is something very important to know: the agent will not always know who is authorized to confirm the contract. Be up front about who you are, your role with the organization, and your ability to negotiate the contract. When confirming the contract details, here are some items you want to be sure are clearly understood:

- The date and location of the performance – you can never be too careful with this, as a mistake could create some major problems.
- Is the contract price correct and is a deposit required?
- What are the arrival and sound check times? With national acts, this can be harder to determine at the time of the contract being created, but stay in communication and be up front about what you can accommodate.

- Start time, end time and set length – it would be very uncomfortable for a performer to show up and play for only 35 minutes of an expected 75-minute show.
- If you are handling lodging, you'll want to be sure you are providing the appropriate accommodations and within a reasonable distance to the performance location.
- Performers can have very specific requests with regard to sound and lights. Be sure you understand the expectations and can provide what is being requested. If you cannot, see if they will accept reasonable substitutions that are available to you. This is also another way to see if you can save on the budget.
- Many performers require that the promotional material be approved before it is distributed. Be sure you know whether or not they will provide these promotional items. Never go to print before you have approval if it is required. Printing is expensive and having to do it twice is no fun.
- Be clear about who will be signing the contract.

Contract Rider & Advancing the Date

Contract riders (a rider outlines the specifics of what needs to be provided for lights, sound, hospitality, etc.) are not set in stone. Do not be afraid to scratch out what does not work for you or what you cannot provide. Pay close attention to the items being requested and always follow through on getting what you agreed to provide. There are plenty of stories in which performers use items on a contract rider as a test to see if you have paid attention to what was requested. If you missed something, they may question other parts of the operation or just be upset in general.

During the advancing stage, you will be working primarily with a tour or production manager for the performer. However, if you have any questions about the advancing, you can always speak with your agent about the process and how to approach any uncomfortable issues you may see with the contract or other logistics. When speaking with the manager, update any contact information between you and the artist. You should confirm travel plans and be sure there are clear expectations on transportation, number of people traveling with the performer, and hotel arrangements. Confusion with any of this could result in an artist waiting for transportation, arriving a day early, or arranging flights to the wrong airport, among others potential headaches you would rather avoid.

A great way to be sure you are getting the show you want is to share with your agent the details about your campus. Is this Mom's Weekend, Springfest, or a late-night program? Knowing this will help the agent inform the performer so they can shape their material to your audience. This includes discussing the appropriateness of the material and what level of language will be allowed and what absolutely cannot be uttered.

After the Show

Follow up with the agent to discuss how things went. If anything weird happened, it's worth discussing. Agents also love to hear when things went well, too. Open up the communication and really discuss what took place. The relationship will benefit from this dialogue and provide great feedback for the next time you may work together.

I cannot express the level of assistance many agents are willing to provide to every person with whom they work. Many have helped me as I've worked with them to plan events from coffeehouse programs to major concerts. My network

includes a larger number of agents and all of them are great people who are willing to help me get the best show possible for the budget I have available. Having a network provides a tremendous advantage in bringing in the best programming for your campus to enjoy, while also being mindful of your resources. Your network will not exist, however, unless you treat people with respect and communicate.

Looking at Things from the Agent's Perspective

Now that we've discussed some positive ways to interact with an agent, let's talk about some critiques agents have about working with student organizations to better understand the challenges they face and how to avoid these behaviors when communicating.

Follow-up from students is often not great, and this is well known among agents. When students reach out, agents realize many of them are shopping around prices for

performers. Agents will go out of their way to find information, but when they deliver, there is often not any follow-up from the student.

While I understand it can be hard to tell an agent you are no longer interested, think about it like this: an agent is contacting and working with people every day. If they are engaging in a dialogue with a student, they are going to follow up. If they don't hear from you, they will follow up again. And again. If you really want to avoid that awkward moment, be up front with the agent when you are no longer interested in the performer. This helps both of you to move on to the next idea, whether or not it's with the same agent. That is business and nothing to be scared of, as long as you have been transparent and honest throughout the process.

To maintain relationships with many agents and agencies, consider creating a log that documents all conversations with agents, including where you are in the process of creating the contract. The most important piece is to track how and when you have followed up with the agent. If you don't follow up, it does not help you to cultivate and grow the relationship. In fact, it can create confusion and might be a problem when you need to work with that person in the future.

AGENTS REALLY WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW THAT DIALOGUE HELPS STUDENTS GET CLOSER TO THE PRICES THEY ARE SEEKING ON PERFORMERS. COMMUNICATING DETAILS IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THAT PROCESS AND IT PROVIDES A MUCH CLEARER PICTURE OF EXPECTATIONS. DON'T BE AFRAID TO LEAD THE CONVERSATION AND COMMUNICATE WHAT YOU WANT.

Agents really want students to know that dialogue helps students get closer to the prices they are seeking on performers. Communicating details is very important in that process and it provides a much clearer picture of expectations. Don't be afraid to lead the conversation and communicate what you want. Remember, too, that while you may not buy from this agent, you still need to show appreciation for their time and effort.

Many agents are wonderful people, but some are not. You can identify some of the challenging agents based on their response time (within three days is reasonable), their ability to communicate clearly, and how willing they are to hear about your event to understand more about what you are seeking.

You can really tell when you are working with a great agent. You will be taken care of and the process will be easier than you expected. If this isn't your experience, reflect on that a bit and decide whether working with that person again is best for your organization.

Develop the Best Relationships You Can

With any event, it is important to take care of, be thankful for, and support your team of people who helped organize and produce your event. The process starts with you and the agent long before the doors open. For many students, entertainment is a career they hope to pursue. A great way to get a foot in the door is to be purposeful in developing the best relationships you can with agents. You never know when the time will come when you encounter that person again. Perhaps they will be the gatekeepers to the job you dream to have.

So, speak up, know your information, and be friendly and respectful to the agents with whom you work. Doing this will help you to grow your network, improve your communication and collaboration skills, and help you to be the best you can be at what you do.

Good luck with your upcoming programming year!

Editor's Note: This article is based on an educational session presented by Berto Cerrillo and Coz Lindsay of Babco Entertainment LLC (MN) at NACA® West.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Berto Cerrillo is Assistant Director of Student Involvement at **Washington State University-Pullman**. He previously served as Advisor for Campus Programs at Eastern Washington University. He served the NACA® West Region as its CAMP Coordinator in 2014, as its Block

Booking Coordinator in 2013 and as its Assistant Block Booking Coordinator in 2012. He currently serves as the region's Volunteer Development Coordinator. He has written for the ACUI (Association of College Unions International) blog, *The Commons*, and has served as an Alumni Ambassador for the Sigma Chi Fraternity. He holds bachelor's degrees in international relations and foreign language from the University of Idaho and a master's degree in organizational leadership from Colorado State University.

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VALENTIJN VANDERSLOOT
Super Artists (CA)

"THERE ARE FOUR WAYS, AND ONLY FOUR WAYS, IN WHICH WE HAVE CONTACT WITH THE WORLD. WE ARE EVALUATED AND CLASSIFIED BY THESE FOUR CONTACTS: WHAT WE DO, HOW WE LOOK, WHAT WE SAY, AND HOW WE SAY IT."
—Dale Carnegie [1888-1955]

There is little doubt that writer and lecturer Dale Carnegie could never have imagined the level to which technology would change the way we communicate. In an age when business correspondence and social media interactions are increasingly blurred and redefined, interpersonal skills as practiced via a range of media have become more important than ever.

And, as school kicks back into high gear, there is a long list of things that need to be sorted and prioritized. For NACA® members, this is a great time to touch base with fellow campus programmers and associate members, alike. Observing the appropriate email and phone etiquette often means the difference between missing the proverbial bus or enjoying years of hugely successful bookings. Here are a few tips to take strategic advantage of the time in between conferences this fall to reinvigorate your interactions with your NACA® colleagues.

Status Updates

Some sources estimate that we are now exposed to over 3,000 marketing messages daily (Media Dynamics Incorporated). While the number surely varies from day to day, there is no doubt that we are living in an age of constant contact. As we consume more content, we also expose ourselves to increased numbers of shouts for attention. With so many voices vying for our time, it can be easy to forget how important it is to market yourself as a performer or a venue.

For Student Programmers

For programmers, the start of the school year is a great time to update associates on your specific programming needs:

- Are you running a monthly comedy night this semester?
- Do you have a weekly concert series that needs to be booked?
- Did your campus recently open a new state-of-the-art performance space?

By offering a brief summary of such accomplishments and goals, you'll bring everyone up to speed and help align performance opportunities with the right talent down the road. Above all, get associate members and the talent they represent excited about working with you.

For Associate Members

Whether you are a self-represented performer or an agent with a seasoned roster of talented performers, the start of the new school year is the perfect time to let people know what you have coming down the pipeline. It is easy for artists to get caught up in their success and forget to bring people up to speed on their progress. Make an effort to answer these types of questions:

- How many new markets did you perform in last year?
- What types of feedback have you received?
- Have you appeared as a guest on a television show?
- Did you launch a successful podcast or web series?

Be respectful of people's time and intelligence and avoid lengthy emails, large attachments that clog up inboxes or long voicemails, but highlight your key accomplishments. Make your intention clear in the subject line. Most importantly, don't forget to update other associates on your most current routing.

Unprecedented Access

We live in a time in which we have unprecedented access to our colleagues. When appropriate, don't be afraid to take advantage of new avenues of communication to enhance the meaningful relationships you've built during conferences. When unsure about how to most efficiently reach out, err on the side of caution and professionalism. Avoid mass emails and focus on specific targets that make sense for all parties involved. Remember that NACA is a community of professionals with a wide range of experiences, all of whom are aiming to achieve diverse, entertaining and educational programing while creating professional leadership and career opportunities for the Association's members.

References

Livinglifelifully.com. Thoughts and Ideas from Dale Carnegie. Retrieved May 19, 2015, from <http://www.livinglifelifully.com/thinkerscarnegie.html>

Media Dynamics Incorporated. (May 19, 2014). Consumers Spend Less Time With Ads. Retrieved May 15, 2015, from http://www.mediadynamicsinc.com/userfiles/files/consumers_spending_less_time_with_ads.pdf

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Valentijn VanderSloot is a talent agent with **Super Artists (CA)**. He began his booking experience as a Resident Advisor at Emerson College (MA), where he earned a bachelor's degree in visual media arts and marketing communications. After graduation, he took a position in the Talent & Specials Department at Comedy Central and later transitioned to Super Artists as a talent agent specializing in comedy and lifestyle tours, specials, TV and digital opportunities for a growing list of clients.

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BEYOND THE CONTRACT

Conversations for a Successful Concert

By

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and

ADAM TOBEY

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Producing a successful concert comes with challenges, but when all parties involved communicate about the budget, schedules, production and hospitality riders and risk management, the odds for success are in your favor.

WHAT MAKES FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONCERT? Was your event a success because it sold out? Did you generate a huge amount of revenue? Was the show well reviewed? Do you need all of these factors combined to be successful?

Every school has its own metrics, and, in the end, there is no wrong answer. Assessment varies from school to school, but usually the goal is the same: create an event and experience that meets the needs of the student body.

Creating a successful concert always comes with challenges, though. Some of these include working with performers to accommodate their needs and requests. Accordingly, there are many questions that need to be answered and decisions that need to be made, some of which are going to be very important, while others may have negligible impact. The overarching question is, how will each decision affect the success of your event? For example, if the impact of a particular decision about an artist's requests is minimal, it's better to simply agree with what the performer wants and move on to the next issue at hand.

It is important to remember that what works best at one university may need to be modified based on the policies or procedures at another school. Every situation can be unique, but most will provide a good lesson in planning. Here are a few key areas to consider while working with performers and coordinating a successful concert:

- Budget – Can (and should) you pay for it?
- Time management – How will you manage the schedule?
- Production rider – Can you accommodate it on stage?
- Hospitality rider – Can you accommodate it backstage?
- Risk management – Is there any cause for concern?

The Budget

An area of concert planning that can never be ignored is the budget. Producing a concert is going to cost money, so it is important to pay attention to how it is spent. Some of the decisions involved are made during contracting, but their impact can extend much further.

For example, artists may want to negotiate aspects of the price of their performances. We recently had a situation where we made an all-inclusive offer for a performer. That means the artist would then be responsible for purchasing their own hotel and transportation. The artist asked for a slightly higher payment or for us to cover ground transportation for the concert. From a strictly budgetary standpoint, it made more sense to agree to pay for ground transportation. Unfortunately, that added another element to be coordinated on the day of the show. There was a slight miscommunication and the artist scheduled their own vehicle in addition to the one we had secured. In looking back on it, we realized saving a few hundred dollars in this case was not worth the headache we experienced during the night of the event.

So, is it worth spending additional money on the performers themselves? If something can be done for less

money, does that always make it better? It is important to carefully consider the flexibility of your budget and how additional expenditures will benefit the concert. This includes those benefits the audience may not see, but that relieve undue stress on the day of the show.

Time Management

Time management is extremely important, especially during the day of a show. There should be a detailed schedule created for all the events that will occur that day, including setup, sound checks, the performances, and clean up, just to name a few. While we can do our best to create a complete schedule, it rarely ends up being 100% correct.

For example, at one of our concerts here at the University of South Florida, we allotted 20 minutes between bands. This gave the crew enough time to handle any equipment changes. We were able to fill that time with a student DJ. All of the changes were moving very quickly, and the final band wanted to start 10 minutes earlier than their actual set time. In that situation, the solution was easy. The band went on early, performed a full set, and we finished up the night earlier than we had planned.

But what if the group making such a request had been scheduled for the middle of the evening? In that situation, you might need to make sure the final band is also willing to start a few minutes early. Otherwise, you may have a 30-40 minute gap between performers and your audience members may become restless.

What if a performer shows up or starts late? We once had a performer arrive as his set time was beginning. He went on stage about 10 minutes later than the projected start time, but also completed his full performance time. Ultimately, the event was a success and the students enjoyed a great show.

There may be many instances where the flow of the event needs to be changed over the course of the day. If you are able to remain flexible, you will find the day can be much more enjoyable and that many artists will appreciate the accommodation you provide. Hopefully, the performer will also be just as cooperative, but be prepared for the possibility that it may not turn out that way.

The Production Rider

When working with production riders, we typically have the production company work out the best deal on our behalf. We have a budget to work with, but sometimes the rider requirements may exceed that budget. Many times, concessions can be made and the performer remains satisfied.

But what happens if the performer really wants specific lights or audio equipment? While both lights and sound are vital to the success of a show, an excessive amount may not be necessary, or even possible, based on your budget. One option is to review the rider and discuss production prior to the contract. This type of conversation can set you up for success earlier so there are no surprises after the contract is executed.

Another option is for the band to pay for certain produc-

tion elements. In the past, if a band wanted additional items, we have asked them to cover those costs, and if it has been that important to them, they have sometimes agreed to do so. In other cases, though, it may be necessary to consider the situation in more detail and decide if you can fit the costs into your budget.

Production issues can still arise on the day of the show, even if you believe everything has been taken care of. For example, a band once showed up on the day of the show, realized the backline rider we received was outdated and they did not have the proper equipment, even though the manager and backline company were in communication with one another.

Thankfully, our backline company was able to work with them and make some of the necessary adjustments for no charge, but if the changes could not have been made, what would have happened? As a university, we had fulfilled our part of the requirements, so we would have hoped the band would have fulfilled theirs and performed the show with the equipment we provided. This day-of-show change could have drastically impacted the success of our show, and if the backline company had not helped as much as they did, we may have needed more time for this particular conversation.

The Hospitality Rider

Hospitality and catering riders can be very long documents, but the goal of each is simple: the performer wants to eat a good meal. For some reason, hospitality is one area that always stresses me [Scibetti] out on the day of a concert. How much money are we actually going to spend? How much of the food are they actually going to eat? We have been in situations where the performer shows up, performs, and never even enters the dressing room. There have been other times in which the band might have relaxed backstage all day, eating quite a bit. Hospitality can have a huge toll on your budget, but if you feel like you are wasting money, there may be other options.

One option we often use when purchasing food for performers is to provide them with a variety of menus from local restaurants. We give them some basic snacks to enjoy, and then ask them to choose a restaurant where we can purchase their dinner. This might require a little more time or a dedicated volunteer to assist with food, but if you have extra staffing, it may be a very simple option for you. If a performer asks for additional items that were not on the rider and you do not have funds in your budget, you can ask them to pay for the additional items, but provide a person to assist with acquiring them.

Many hospitality decisions will be made after the contract is signed. It is important to keep open communication and discuss your options to determine what will fit best with your budget and time management.

Risk Management

Risk management at any university event is extremely important. With concerts and other large events, additional security or police presence may be needed. Instances may arise in which the performer could create additional risk for your event. The main concern is crowd interaction. In the

heat of the moment, a performer may go out into the crowd or attempt to bring someone on stage. We try to be proactive, including a line in our offer letter stating, "Artist must refrain from inappropriate contact with students."

What if they do it anyway? Some hosts may want to stop the show and end early. This might actually be the only option to maintain a safe environment, but make sure to consider how audience members will react. An angry crowd of thousands may create a riskier situation and be tougher to handle than trying to slowly guide a student away from the stage or get the performer back on stage. Make sure to walk through these different possibilities in a security planning meeting so no one is caught off guard when such situations occur.

Even if you do not explicitly state anything about crowd interaction in the contract, it may be helpful to have a conversation with the artist's manager on the day of the show about the performance. A manager once told us a singer enjoyed going out onto the barricades, but not into the crowd. We were able to appoint additional security to that area and the show went on with no additional risk.

If there is a concern an artist's actions will have a negative impact on the success of your show, make sure to have a conversation with the artist's manager to discuss other alternatives before the performer takes the stage.

Ultimate Success?

Each concert presents an opportunity to learn something new. The challenge may be similar to one of the examples presented here, or it may fall into a completely different category. Furthermore, you may look for different "levels" of success at different events. Always assess your successes as well failures, and use that information to create even better experiences in the future. Remember to make a note when a unique situation occurs so you can analyze it after the show. Did you handle it well? Can you do something better next time? Finally, after considering all individual situations, ask yourself – was the concert a success? We hope your answer is yes.

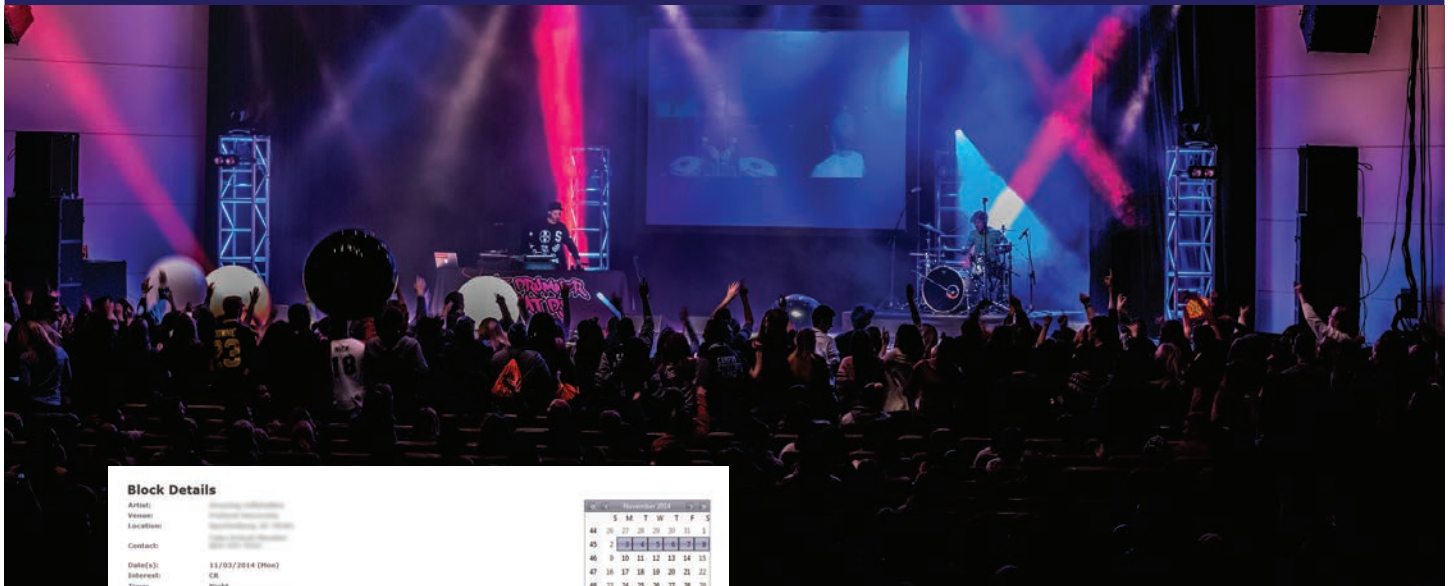
ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Richard Scibetti is a Coordinator in the Center for Student Involvement at the **University of South Florida**, where he previously served as Graduate Advisor. Active in NACA, he and Adam Tobey co-presented an educational session on which this article is based at the 2015 NACA® National Convention. He is also the Concert Management Institute Coordinator-Elect. He holds a bachelor's degree in biomathematics/statistics from Rutgers University (NJ) and a master's degree in college student affairs from the University of South Florida.

Adam Tobey is the president of **Concert Ideas, Inc. (NY)** and has been in the industry for 21 years. He has written extensively for *Campus Activities Programming*® magazine and has also been published in *Billboard*. He has received numerous awards from NACA and the International Entertainment Buyers Association (IEBA).

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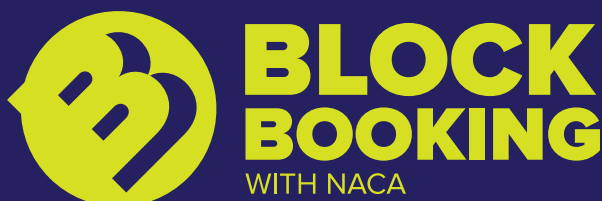
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Map Label	Interval	Date Range	School / Venue	Dist from Parent University	Distance from Parent
C	CR	11/05/2014 (Thu) Night	Test University, Columbia, SC	75	84
D	CR	11/06/2014 (Thu) Day	Patent Junior College, Charleston, SC	152	118
E	CR	11/07/2014 (Fri) Day	Patent Community College, Mt Pleasant, SC	190	9
F	CR	11/08/2014 (Sat) Day	Patent Tech School, Georgetown, SC	181	58

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