



Campus Events Guidelines

Austin College and Student Life offers the following guidance for hosting on-campus meetings, events, and programs. Implementation of these public health guidelines for on-campus events will help keep our college and community safer, limiting the spread of COVID-19.

This is an evolving situation. The guidance included in this document is adapted from recommended practices, and will be updated as additional information becomes available from federal, state or local health and governing sources, especially in the areas of capacity and attendance limits.

During these challenging time the College is striving to provide maximum health and safety assistance for our constituents and visitors to the campus. Therefore, the College has established a committee to help with managing the various campus events that take place on campus during this fall semester. The College has appointed a committee to review campus events that involve permitting guests to come to campus as well as to make sure routine on-going events are planned in accordance with these COVID guidelines. In order to provide the best timely review of a proposed event, please submit the proposal a minimum of two weeks in advance of the proposed event.

Committee members include:

Mr. Michael Deen, Dean of Students

Dr. Steve Goldsmith, Dean of the Sciences, Professor of Biology

Ms. Kate Shelley, Executive Director of Institutional Events and Alumni Engagement

General Recommendations for Meetings, Events, and Programs

1. **Large gatherings of 100 or more people are prohibited.** Organizers should postpone the meeting, event, or program, restructure it, or employ remote technology if possible.
2. Meetings, events, and programs of any size should be reconsidered. Use discretion to minimize all in-person meetings and consider virtual or hybrid delivery.
3. Event and program modifications to be considered include:
 - a. Holding events and programs outdoors, if possible, or in well-ventilated spaces that provide 6 feet of physical distancing
 - b. Providing hand sanitizer stations
 - c. Regulating the flow and density of people entering, attending, and departing the event or program
4. Reservations or RSVPs are encouraged for all meetings, events, and programs. Pay careful attention to check-in areas that they do not form lines and/or crowds.
5. Emphasize 6 feet of physical distancing between all attendees.
6. Use of mask/facial covering is required for all on-campus meetings, events, and programs including outdoor activities when physical distancing of at least 6 feet is not maintained at all times. If a participant does not want to wear a mask/facial covering, they should be denied admission to the event. Organizers should be prepared to turn away anyone that does not have the proper mask/ facial covering. Organizers should model appropriate behavior by wearing facial coverings at indoor and outdoor activities.
7. Food and Beverage Services must be arranged through Dining Services.

8. No outside food or beverage will be approved for meetings, events or programs.
9. Follow participant capacity limitations and any other guidelines set forth by the college.

Things to consider

Organizers should know and understand the risks associated with hosting an in-person meeting, event, or program.

The more people an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and/or COVID-19 spreading. If individuals are wearing masks/facial covering and practicing 6-foot physical distancing, the risk will be lower. Risk becomes elevated when one or more parties are not wearing a mask/facial covering and are within 6-feet of each other for a duration greater than 15 minutes.

As we understand it, the risk of COVID-19 spreading at meetings, events, and programs increases as follows:

- **No risk:** Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.
- **Low risk:** Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- **Medium risk:** Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear mask/facial covering, do not share objects, and with attendees coming from outside the local area.
- **Highest risk:** Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

Mission-centric college-sponsored events, and programs (to include student organization meetings and events) may resume with maximum attendance at 50% of room space capacity.

Given the proper physical distancing and occupancy restrictions, event organizers should expect to reduce the total number of participants at the event location. It is recommended to increase the duration of events and segment activities into shifts for participants and rotate event staff accordingly. NOTE: If segmenting events or hosting multiple smaller events in lieu of one larger event, space out start times so that there is not an overlap of departures and arrivals and so that organizers have adequate time to sanitize shared surfaces and/or materials.

Selecting a Facility/Space

1. Consider virtual options, such as Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Zoom, social media, and video chats.
 2. Utilize well-ventilated spaces, including outdoors.
 3. Choose a room or space large enough to prevent crowding for the expected attendance. All attendees must wear appropriate facial covering and should maintain physical distance of 6 feet or more before, during, and after the event.
 4. Outdoor events and programs should minimize in-person contact between participants. 6 feet of physical distancing and use of masks/facial coverings during outdoor events are required. There are state guidelines on outdoor gatherings over 10 people. Guidance will be coming soon on the University approval process for outdoor events over 10 people.
1. **Physical Distancing**
 - a. Encourage physical distancing at your meetings, events, and programs of at least 6 feet apart between all participants.

- b. Consider using barriers such as stanchions, directional signs, as well as other spacing indicators. If distance markers are not available, the 6-foot range can be approximated by two participants extending their arms without touching.
 - c. Special attention should be given to maintaining physical distancing in areas commonly known to be high traffic in buildings such as entrances and departure sites.
 - d. Students, staff, and faculty should strongly discourage hand shaking and fist-bumps. In other words, limit person to person direct contact.
- 2. Hand Sanitizer/Hand-wash Stations**
- a. There is increased availability of hand-hygiene stations throughout campus buildings and meeting areas.
 - b. If needed, a portable hand sanitizer station will be available in the Wright Campus Center Office that can be picked up prior to a meeting.
 - c. Ensure access to hand-washing stations and/or hand sanitizer, and provide additional sanitization stations as needed, particularly at outdoor events where permanent hand-hygiene stations are not available.
- 3. Health Screening**
- a. All event organizers and participants should conduct a personal self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms.
 - b. Please encourage all students, staff and faculty feeling sick to stay home instead of attending a student organization meeting or gathering.
- 4. Signage/Announcements**
- a. Display signage throughout meeting areas and on-campus buildings (especially at entrances/exits and restrooms for meeting areas) to educate and promote the importance of hand washing, use of hand-sanitizer, cough/sneeze etiquette, and symptom recognition.
 - b. Make announcements as appropriate to remind participants about the importance of exercising responsible behaviors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- 5. Gloves/PPE**
- a. The use of gloves is appropriate when distributing items or handling shared items at an event (such as check-in equipment, agendas/handouts, giveaway items, food, etc.)
- 6. Cleaning**
- a. There is a campus-wide effort to increase sanitation of college facilities and promote public health practices.

During Meeting, Event, or Program

- Display Signs/Posters/Table Tents/Digital images reminding participants of prevention measures.
- Assign a point person for participants to use as a resource should they develop symptoms during the event.
- Announce actions participants should take to protect themselves and limit infection spread at the start and throughout the event.
- Encourage people to replace handshakes with greetings that do not require skin contact.

Important Contact

Campus Room Reservations
Kimberly Donnell, Event Services Manager
WCC 148 | wrightcenter@austincollege.edu
903-813-2293 office

Student Life Office
WCC 201 | studentlife@austincollege.edu
903-813-2306 office

