STUDENT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The ITE Student Leadership Summit (SLS) is a conference organized by students for students. It is expected to occur yearly and is hosted by one ITE Student Chapter within the jurisdiction of the Florida Puerto Rico ITE (FLPRITE) District. The first SLS in the State of Florida was hosted by the University of Florida in 2018.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to students on best practices for hosting a SLS event. This is a living document, and it will be updated as needed.

DISTRICT BOARD INVOLVEMENT

The hosting Student Chapter is expected to lead all major efforts in the conference planning. However, support from District and Section officers is encouraged to maximize the success of the SLS. Some examples of support that could be provided by the District/Section are:

- Provide advice and feedback on conference planning
- Facilitate connections and provide introductions to potential speakers, sponsors, and ITE HQ
- Provide financial support, via sponsorship or in-kind donation, if possible
- Serve as "banker" if requested (receive and process registration payments, provide deposits for hotel and facility rental, etc.)
- Advertise the SLS on FLPRITE media (FLPRITE newsletter, social media, eblast, etc.)
- Encourage District/Section officers and ITE general membership to attend and volunteer at the SLS
- Allow for District flagship events to be held during the SLS, such as Traffic Bowl or Student Shark Tank, if schedule allows
- Help identify the school that will host the following year's SLS

EVENT STRUCTURE

Each SLS event is unique, and the hosting school is encouraged to be creative by adding their own flavor, highlighting local favorites to the SLS. The typical SLS held in the FLPRITE District follows the following structure:

- Day 1 afternoon: Attendees arrive, followed by a social event/ informal networking dinner
- Day 2: Full day of conference, including a few technical sessions, many sessions focusing on soft skills, networking opportunities, career fair, formal lunch and/or dinner with keynote speaker(s)
- Day 3 morning: Additional soft skills sessions, networking in a more informal environment, and conference closing with a presentation from the next SLS host

LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

As a conference organized by students, for students, the SLS planning committee is directly responsible for the event's success. Each SLS committee may be structured differently, but common roles are listed below:

1. District/Section Board Representative(s)
2. Faculty Advisor
3. Chair/Co-Chair or Chair/Vice-Chair
4. Committee Chairs for the following committees:
    a. Finance
    b. Fundraising
    c. Technical
    d. Non-Technical
    e. Social Events
    f. Communications
    g. Event Logistics
    h. Volunteer Coordinator

As a best practice, it is recommended to develop an organizational chart to quickly communicate roles within the SLS planning committee. Capitalize on the students' strengths when assigning them to committees. A student may serve on several committees, and important committees should have more than two (2) members to provide adequate support.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. District / Section Boards

The District and Section Boards are as interested in ensuring the success of SLS as the hosting school, and it may assist the SLS Committee with the following:

- Assist with the selection of the ITE Student Chapter for hosting
- Facilitate meetings with the current and previous hosts for information sharing
- Identify up to 3 members as District SLS Liaisons to the Student Chapter
- Provide support to the hosting Student Chapter to identify potential speakers and sponsors
- If requested, provide a registration platform for registration
- If requested, enter into a financial agreement to act as Treasury for the SLS event
- Promote SLS on the District's and Sections' website and at meetings
- Share SLS information to ITE International for inclusion in the calendar and marketing materials
- Archive all SLS-related documents and provide access to the hosting Student Chapter

2. Faculty Advisor

The Faculty Advisor's main role is to provide consistent support to the SLS Committee and provide leadership guidance to the SLS Committee Chair. The advisor's responsibilities include:

- Initiate the formation of the SLS Committee
- Assist with finalizing the SLS Committee Chair, officers, and members
- Assist with the lists of potential speakers and sponsors
- Work with student government and other on-campus offices to allocate resources for the SLS event
- Review draft agenda and proposed budget and provide input, if needed
- Review final agenda and monitor expenses
- Oversee the overall arrangement
- Bridge the communication between the District SLS Liaisons and the SLS Committee
- Promote the SLS with other faculty members and peer schools

3. Chair/Co-Chair or Chair/Vice-Chair

The SLS Chairs are expected to provide leadership to SLS Committee members, showcase the Student Chapter's strength, coordinate the work of the SLS Committees, and develop as leaders. Responsibilities include:

- Schedule regular meetings (monthly, bi-weekly, weekly) to discuss the progress of each task
- Prepare a timeline for each task and share it with members for daily or weekly updates
- Identify a running list of action items with clear deadlines and assign responsible member(s), they may include:
  - Identify "block-out" dates
  - Identify religious/ethnic holidays (e.g. Lunar New Year, Diwali, Ramadan, Easter, Persian New Year, etc.) that may keep certain groups from attending the conference
  - Plan for a meeting location and a backup location, if possible

- o Plan for a social event location and a backup location, if possible
- o Identify hotel and check for availability and rates; identify a backup hotel, if possible
- o Assess audio/video needs
- o Prepare save-the-date flyer, if needed
- o Prepare draft sponsorship package, seek input, and finalize package
- o Prepare a draft budget
- o Prepare draft agenda
- o Revise draft agenda with input from Faculty Advisor, District SLS Liaisons, and SLS Committee members
- o Keep track of expenditures and available funds
- o Confirm major speakers
- o Confirm food, hotel, AV, and social event details
- o Keep track of the registration of professionals
- o Communicate with Speakers, Professionals, and Students
- Be the point of contact for Sponsors
- Assign speaking roles to sub-committee chairs
- Perform other duties as needed to ensure the success of the SLS
- Debrief with members and share lessons learned with the host for the following year
- Provide SLS documents to the District SLS Liaisons for archiving

4. Committees

Below are the general roles for each identified committee. The numbers in parentheses are the recommended minimum number of members, including the chairperson. It should be noted that not all "committees" are needed, and some will have crossover responsibilities. **It is advisable for representative(s) from the school hosting the following year to serve on one or more committees.**

a. Finance (2)

The Finance Committee's key role is to oversee the SLS's budget and ensure the financial success of the SLS. The committee's responsibilities include:

- Create an initial budget (see example)
- Manage contracts (catering, hotel, meeting space, etc.)
- Set registration fee (additional guidance about setting registration fees is provided in *Registration)*
- Track income and expenses and adjust budget, as needed

b. Fundraising (2)

The Fundraising Committee's key role is to ensure the SLS's success by maximizing the funds raised and must work very closely with the Finance Committee. The committee's responsibilities include:

- Develop a sponsorship program (think about what the company gets for its sponsorship)
- Reach out to companies
- Track sponsorships
- Maintain contact with the sponsors

- Arrange for company promotional items to be present at the registration table, included in the giveaway, and on marketing materials (as promised in the sponsorship program advertisement)

c. Programing (3)

The Programming Committee's key role is to ensure the SLS's program includes an adequate number of technical and non-technical sessions on topics interesting and helpful to the SLS attendees. The committee's responsibilities include:
- Identify and invite speakers/industry experts to speak
- Organize workshop/field trip
- Identify and invite judges for various competitions
- Identify and invite volunteers for the career fair/resume reviews/mock interviews
- Identify student moderators and organize/provide training to best manage session
- Coordinate with the other committees on logistics and venue space
- Monitor the schedule and adjust the following session on the event days

For more information, refer to *Conference Sessions*.

d. Social Events (2)

The Social Event Committee's key role is to ensure the SLS's participants have a memorable experience and build long-lasting comradeship through social events. The committee's responsibilities include:
- Research venues and pricing for Day 1 night evening event
- Advertise the event, include clear instructions on parking and transportation options
- Plan before- or after-hour events (morning run, sports event, pub crawl…)

e. Communication (2)

The Communication Committee's key role is to ensure that the SLS's program is widely advertised, attracts the most qualified speakers and guests, and provides the most benefits to the SLS attendees. The committee's responsibilities include:
- Develop and post save-the-date flyer
- Create, test, and post registration website
- Develop postings on sponsorship, speakers, and program highlights
- Help develop and post the draft and final program
- Engage social media/website/email blast
- Coordinate with FLPRITE District

f. Event Logistics (4)

The Event Logistics Committee's key role is to ensure the SLS runs smoothly by overplanning and identifying backup options should something arise. "No news is good news" is this committee's mantra, as it's the unsung hero of the SLS. The committee's responsibilities include:
- Coordinate with hotel
- Coordinate with catering
- Reserve conference rooms
- Ensure adequate audio/video
- Coordinate with invited speakers

- ▪ Recruit photographers
- ▪ Purchase office supplies for various events
- ▪ Test to make sure all equipment needed works properly
- ▪ Actively monitor logistics during the SLS and address any unplanned issues that may arise
- ▪ Initiate the ordering of shirts, bags, padfolio, etc.
- ▪ Create and place wayfinding signs and banners
- ▪ Coordinate printings of event map, and event calendar
- ▪ Arrange for transportation, especially for off-side outings (social hours, field trips, etc.)

g. Volunteer Coordinator (2)

The Volunteer Committee's key role is to ensure the SLS participants and guests feel welcome and that the SLS runs smoothly by identifying an adequate number of volunteers to support over the three days. The committee's responsibilities include:

- ▪ Serve as point of contact for out-of-town students and speakers and be ready to provide directions and recommendations when requested
- ▪ Create and place wayfinding signs
- ▪ Serve at the registration desk
- ▪ Assign volunteers for various functions before, during, and after the events (see sample spreadsheet under *Day of Event*)

BEST PRACTICES AND LEARNED LESSONS

The SLS is a complex project and should <u>not</u> be handled by a single individual. Frequent communication amongst the SLS chair(s), student advisor, committee chairs and FLPRITE are the key elements of successful conference planning.

Being part of an SLS planning committee is an invaluable experience to acquire hands-on skills in project management, communication, and conflict resolution. Below are some recommended tips for a smoother experience leading an SLS planning committee, based on practical experience and lessons learned from past events:

- The initial stage of conference planning involves a significant amount of brainstorming and high-level discussions. At this stage, the involved SLS planning committee is expected to include a leadership team the SLS chair/vice-chair and managers for a few key roles (technical program, communications, finances, fundraising, etc.)
- Keep the faculty advisor involved in all steps of the planning process, but also ensure that other faculty in the department are aware of the event
- Provide frequent updates to ITE District/Section officers
- As the scope of the conference becomes clearer, the planning of the conference also becomes progressively more complex. More students are expected to join the conference team, typically to work under the supervision of the leadership team described in the previous section
- Plan for routine meetings to discuss progress and address any potential issues
- Have a work management platform to keep track of the project progress, actionable items, discussions, assumptions, etc.
- Acknowledge that students have busy periods during the semester such as exams, project submissions, holidays, summer internships; and avoid planning too much workload around these dates to avoid burnout and internal conflicts
- **Communicate, communicate, communicate**! Good and frequent communication is the key to successful project delivery
- Follow up with team members who are falling behind on their duties. Be empathetic and provide support, as needed, but do not be afraid of having hard conversations and ultimately replacing them, if necessary
- **Be flexible**! Circumstances change constantly and there will always be a need to adapt

Conference Sessions

A great SLS conference program must be tailored to students to maximize their engagement and provide a great experience. Below are tips related to planning the conference program:

- **Avoid heavily technical sessions** – this can be a common pitfall in student chapters with a heavy majority of transportation graduate students. Invite students from other disciplines to better understand a broader set of students' interests. Experience shows that technical sessions receive less engagement and interest from attendees and can be particularly intimidating to young students such as freshmen or sophomores.

- Plan career-related events, such as soft skills, mocking interviews, resume reviews, career fairs, etc. as these are well-received
- Make sure to provide opportunities for the students to connect with professionals and potential future employers
- Remember to add fun to the program, including icebreakers, networking sessions, and interactive sessions, as much as possible
- **Shoot for the stars when inviting speakers!** The worst-case scenario is receiving a "no" or no answer at all; at times the speakers would suggest a more suitable speaker
- Invite speakers as soon as possible to ensure they can attend
- Be flexible with the program, as speakers may cancel their participation due to unforeseen circumstances
- Make conference pictures available in a timely manner, preferably right after the SLS closure, so attendees can share them on social media
- Ensure that sessions immediately after lunch are interactive and engaging; including activities that require most participants to move around and speak up
- Some topics for consideration include:
  - Bachelor vs. Master vs. PhD/Postdoc
  - Small vs. large firms discussion
  - Public vs. private vs. academia discussion
  - Interview etiquette
  - Salary negotiation
  - Transition from school to work
  - Time management
  - Conflict resolution
  - Importance of being a part of the professional organization
  - What to expect in the first five years
  - In-person vs. remote work pros and cons
  - Office etiquette
  - Navigating the workforce as international students
  - Importance of professional certifications
  - How to advocate for yourself to attend meetings/conference
  - Delivering effective presentations

Contracts

A critical part of the SLS planning involves handling vendors for the event - for example:

- Summit Venue: Answers to these questions will help with determining the appropriate venue: How would the rooms be set up (stadium, classroom, in a circle, etc.)? Be creative with table arrangements so the room can be used for multiple purposes. Will there be a stage and a podium? Will there be audio/video equipment? Whom to contact for custodial service? Whom to contact for IT support?
- Venue selection: Universities typically offer rooms for student organizations at very affordable fees – make sure to explore opportunities offered by your university. Another option is using the hotel venue for attendees' lodging, but these may require a minimum number of room nights

and are typically more expensive. Try to use as few rooms as possible, keep all rooms in the same building, even on the same floor.

- Catering: Is there a minimum amount required? Will the food/drink be delivered? Remember food need to be arranged for Day 1 dinner, Day 2 breakfast/lunch/dinner, and Day 3 brunch, as well as refreshments throughout the event
- School: Does the school/college have any existing contract we can be under? This could limit the liabilities and need for additional logistical effort
- Hotel: What are group rates, and when is the deadline for reserving at special rates? Are there any attrition ("no-show") fees? Is the hotel location convenient to the SLS event venue? What are the transportation options to the event?
- Products: shirts, bags, padfolio, banner, awards

The following tips are provided on managing contracts:

- Reach out to your department staff for recommendations of potential vendors
- Reach out to legal services in your university to evaluate proposals. **Never sign a contract that you do not fully understand, or if you are not sure you have the authority to do so! ITE International can help with the review process**
- Explore multiple vendors when available – request proposals from multiple vendors (ideally 3, at minimum) and negotiate extensively to find the best option for your conference
- Consider taxes, shipping, licensing fees in estimates
- Explore any tax-exemption opportunities that may be available to your organization
- Seek clauses that can protect you from unforeseen circumstances. For example: adjusting meals or number of hotel rooms if needed; avoid attrition fees ("no show") on hotel rooms
- Keep track of all required payments and their due dates; be aware of required downpayments and their effects on your event cash flow

Professional Conduct

The SLS event is expected to have professionals in attendance, and it must be treated as a professional conference. Some advice provided for interactions:

- Be respectful when interacting with all professionals
- **Arrive on time (i.e., early) for sessions** and refrain from using your cell phone during the presentations
- Dress accordingly. Shorts and T-shirts are fine for an outdoor activity, and dress shirt/blouse and pants/skirt are appropriate for any session with professionals. Nice polo shirts and khakis are also acceptable. A tie and/or jacket is a nice touch for the mock interview.
- Provide a recommended dress code in the SLS program for attendees to better plan their attire
- Note that students arrive at varying times on Day 1 so be sure not to have professionals on-site without having a majority of your students present
- Provide a thank you note after the conference
- Reserve part of your budget to provide single-occupancy rooms for professionals
- Communicate early and often with professional speakers and attendees

- Clearly state expectations in their involvement and what you would like them to do. If you are unsure and what their feedback, state that and ask, don't assume

Finances

Finances are critical to hosting a successful SLS. The ultimate goal of the SLS finance manager is to ensure that all income sources (sponsorship, registration fees, donation, etc.) are accounted for correctly and all contracts are properly executed, preferably with a small surplus at the end. Section or District Treasurer is available to assist, if requested.

The event budget can be progressively detailed as the scope of the conference becomes clearer over time. In the event that the SLS is organized together with another District- or Section-led event, clear financial tracking is required. An example is shown in the figure on the next page - when cost breakdown structure can be followed to represent the distributions of income and expenses.
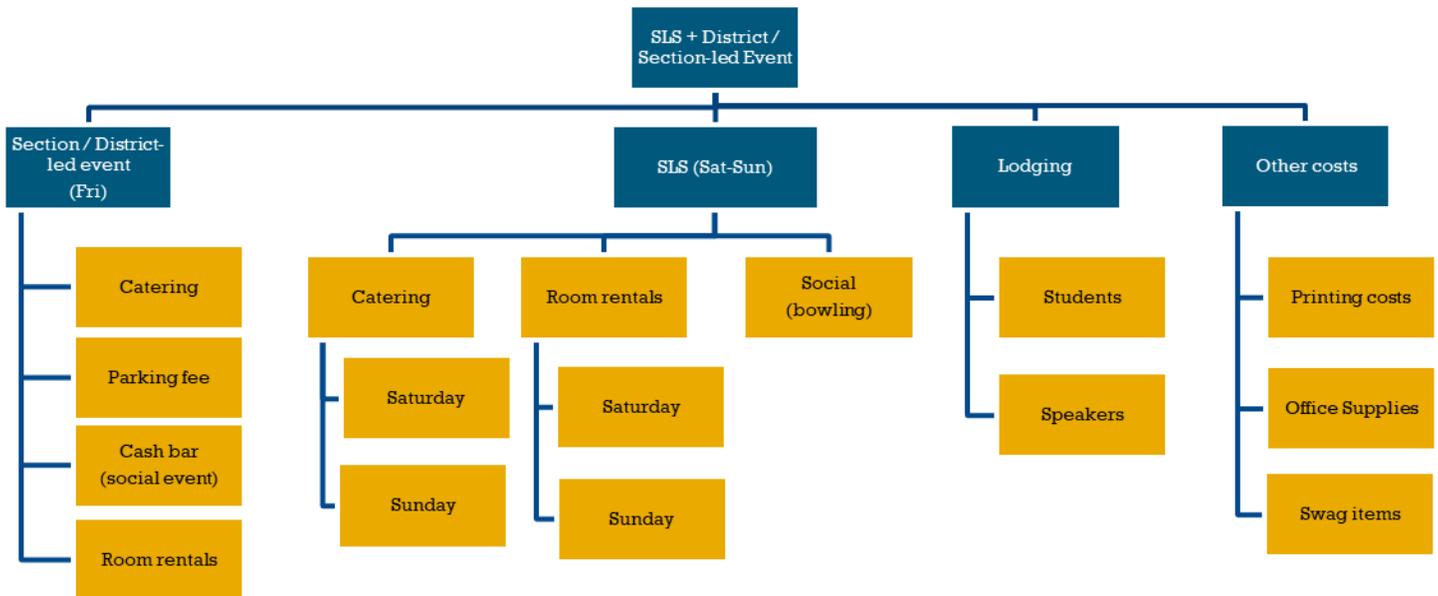
The following advice is provided on managing the SLS finances:

- Investigate if your school has a department/staff for corporate gifts and work with them to develop a strategy
- Be familiar with all details on contract vendors, including downpayments, fees, penalty, and interests
- Work very closely with the fundraising manager to adjust the costs to the expected budget
- Work with an estimated attendance number in order to compute a per-capita cost – this will be very useful in determining registration fees
- Plan a strict budget, think of everything, adjust as needed
- Plan for contingencies, including rush service fees, and pay bills on time

Fundraising

Hosting a successful SLS at affordable rates can only be achieved through the generosity of the event sponsors. Therefore, a successful fundraising campaign is critical to the success of the conference. Recommended practices for fundraising include:

- Develop a list of companies and their contact point to start reaching out
- **Do not rely on cold emails only – explore personal connections**; if needed, ask faculty in your department or ITE District/Section officers to connect with potential sponsors
- Set multiple sponsorship tiers and be clear about what the sponsors get for their generous sponsorship
- Set up paperwork for tax deductions. A sale tax exemption can save at least 5%!
- Ask sponsors if they have any promotional materials or gifts (swag) to distribute which may minimize costs
- Work closely with the finance manager, set sponsorship goals, and track them constantly so budget can be adjusted, if needed
- Note competing organizations and University departments and communicate instead of appearing to "steal their funding" from companies
- Reach out to the Student Government within the University. They can be very supportive in providing financial support if convinced that this event is beneficial to the University.

Branding / Communication

A great event also must be properly advertised to ensure attendance goals are met. The following pieces of advice are provided:

- Create a website and update it frequently as the main public source of all information
- Use University advisors, ITE channels, and fellow students to get the word out
- Think of questions before people ask them and have answers ready
- Know who is talking to whom and avoid two people contacting the same person
- If needed, proof-read emails for correct information and professional tone
- Understand what material needs to be public, shared with stakeholders, or shared internally

Meals

Meals are expected to be the costliest item of an event and must be planned with extra caution. For example:

- When contracting a catering vendor, look for clauses that allow for flexibility in changing orders
- It is a common practice to order meals in a quantity smaller than your expected attendance (approximately 80%-90%) to account for no-shows. Reach out to your department or local ITE District/Section for additional guidance
- Be mindful of attendees with dietary restrictions and include a question about it on the registration page

Lodging

Lodging is typically provided with registration to minimize travel costs and ensure students can attend the conference for an affordable price. It is also one of the most expensive items in the SLS budget following meals. Therefore, the following tips are provided when planning lodging:

- Group hotel reservation can be challenging, seek help from ITE HQ reviewing hotel contract clauses. Aim for flexibility in changing the number of rooms in the hotel block, and legal protection from attrition fees ("no-show")
- If multiple students are assigned per room, develop a system to allocate students together. It is possible to provide a question on the registration page asking students to identify their roommates or asking each attending school to provide a list of students that will be staying together. If your team takes the responsibility of assigning students together, make sure to assign same-gender students to each room
- For professionals getting lodging with registration, assign them on a single-room occupancy basis and make sure to adjust the registration fee accordingly. At times, it's easier for the professional to arrange for their own lodging
- Even though lodging is included with the registration, it is customary for hotels to require a credit card for incidentals for each room. State it clearly on the registration page to avoid potential issues
- Consider reserving budget to cover lodging expenses of keynote speakers

Registration

The period of one to two months prior to the conference kick-off can be overwhelming as there are many elements to be taken care of at the same time. Handling registrations can be a major source of problems if not properly planned. Good practices include:

- Open registrations in a timely manner to allow attending schools to plan for the SLS. ITE Student Chapters from different universities may be required to request travel budget months in advance, therefore, keep frequent communication with them. If possible, provide them with a ballpark estimate of registration costs
- Expand the invitation to schools from other districts/states, such as Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Louisiana, and the Carolinas
- Student registration fees are typically subsidized by corporate sponsorship so they can attend the conference at an affordable price**. It is strongly recommended to set students' fees to the minimum as possible to maximize attendance**. However, low rates can also be an issue as high student attendance can have a negative impact on finances. If needed, set a maximum attendance limit and close registrations when the cap is reached.
- Avoid making student registration free, even when you have a healthy budget. Absence rates are significantly higher when students do not commit to paying anything, and it can make event planning significantly harder (e.g., ordering the right amount of food from catering)
- Professional registration fees do not need to be subsidized and can be set to at least cover per-capita costs
- Verify the possibility of providing PDHs for professionals attending the event and advertise it on the registration page

Transportation

Transportation is another important factor in conference planning to avoid any confusion among attendees. Publicize any relevant transportation information for all attendees, including information on:

- Public transportation

- Shuttle service from hotel
- Parking information (location, fees, etc.). If budget allows, consider providing parking permits for speakers as recognition of their effort
- Exact meeting locations on campus, including building names, floor numbers, room numbers, reference points, and other landmarks. This is particularly important for attendees who are not familiar with the campus

Day of Event

Each conference is unique and will have its own planning schedule. However, based on experience with past events, it is strongly recommended to have a list of volunteering roles. Every event will have unplanned circumstances, and having roles clearly communicated with the planning team is essential to ensure that unforeseen issues are addressed quickly and effectively. The key is to essentially arrive and experience the event steps before attendees arrive. Below are some helpful tips:

- Send an email to everyone the night before or the morning of Day 1 with a reminder of parking location(s) and opening session location
- Check to confirm parking spaces are available in the designated parking lot(s). Parking on campus can be challenging, especially for visitors.
- Arrange for a test drive from the hotel to the SLS venue to make sure no detour is needed
- Confirm wayfinding signs are placed appropriately, be mindful about those arriving on foot, by bike, bus, carshare, and personal vehicle from parking garages. Wayfinding signs should be placed at major decision point locations (at the minimum, at entrances to building, elevators/stairs, and at hallways)
- Provide an overall schedule of the day and locations during the opening session
- At the end of each session, provide a reminder of the next session and location (together with directions)
- Committee members should have special nametags or shirt, so guests can easily identify them in case guests need assistance
- Create a chat group of SLS chairs and planning committee chairs for continuing contact
- Prepare a list of contact information for catering companies, audio/video/technology contact, building maintenance, housekeeping, security, etc.

On the next page, a sample list of volunteering roles for the event day is provided. Feel free to customize this to your own event needs.

Role	Day	Start Time	End Time	Student Name(s)	Phone Number	Description
Registration Desk	Day 1	12:30 PM	1:30 PM			Provide badge, tote bags, and required information; at least 2 are needed
Registration Desk	Day 1	1:30 PM	3:00 PM			Provide badge, tote bags, and required information; at least 2 are needed
Audio/video Check	Day 1	12:30 PM	5:30 PM			Take care of the audio/video/technology for all speakers during the entire afternoon
Catering Arrangements	Day 1	2:00 PM	3:30 PM			Serve as the point of contact for catering, pick up food/drink for break or meet with delivery person, and set up food/drink
Speaker Assistant	Day 1	1:30 PM	5:30 PM			Confirm with speakers on their speaking time, and provide assistance if needed
Mock Interview Recruiter	Day 1	1:30 PM	5:30 PM			Seek out and invite professionals for the mock interviews on Day 2
Logistics Helper	Day 1	12:30 PM	5:30 PM			Provide speakers parking permits and provide directions to attendees
Meeting Room Wrap-up	Day 1	5:30 PM	6:00 PM			Make sure the meeting room(s) are clean after sessions are over
Reception Catering	Day 1	6:00 PM	7:30 PM			Serve as the point of contact for catering, pick up food/drink for dinner or meet with delivery person, and set up food/drink
Reception Room	Day 1	6:30 PM	9:30 PM			Arrive early at social venue and make sure room is good shape for the reception
Career Fair Assistant	Day 1	4:00 PM	7:00 PM			Serve as the point of contact to sponsors, and provide assistance with setting up the Career Fair
Career Fair Assistant	Day 2	8:00 AM	10:00 AM			Serve as the point of contact to sponsors, and provide assistance with setting up the Career Fair
Catering Career Fair	Day 2	8:00 AM	9:00 AM			Serve as the point of contact for catering, pick up food/drink for breakfast or meet with delivery person, and set up food/drink
Registration Desk	Day 2	8:00 AM	9:00 AM			Provide badge, tote bags, and required information; at least 2 are needed
A/V Check	Day 2	9:50 AM	11:20 AM			Take care of the audio/video/technology for all speakers in the morning session
Coffee Break Catering	Day 2	11:00 AM	11:30 AM			Serve as the point of contact for catering, pick up food/drink for morning break or meet with delivery person, and set up food/drink
Mock Interview Setup	Day 2	11:15 AM	12:15 PM			Help with room set up, greet, and guide professionals and students to the respective seats, and be available to provide assistance if needed
Lunch Catering Setup	Day 2	12:00 PM	1:30 PM			Serve as the point of contact for catering, pick up food/drink for lunch or meet with delivery person, and set up food/drink
Special Event Setup Help	Day 2	12:00 PM	2:00 PM			Coordinate with District/Section Special Event (e.g., Traffic Bowl competition) person and provide assistance if needed
Coffee Break Catering	Day 2	3:15 PM	4:15 PM			Serve as the point of contact for catering, pick up food/drink for afternoon break or meet with delivery person, and set up food/drink
Rooms Wrap Up	Day 2	5:15 PM	6:15 PM			Make sure the meeting room(s) are clean after sessions are over

RISK MANAGEMENT

Being a complex project, hosting an SLS is not free of risks, and it is simply not possible to prevent all undesired outcomes during the planning process. However, a good practice of planning an SLS includes monitoring potential risks and having planned countermeasures in case they occur.

Common risks observed during past editions of the SLS include:

Risk	Countermeasure(s)
Keynote speaker has a conflict and cancels participation	Ask the speaker for another suggestion. Have a potential alternate speaker to present as keynote, if needed.
Speakers have conflicts and cannot participate	Ask the speaker for another suggestion. Have a "Plan B" activity to replace any session (e.g., networking event, icebreaker, social, etc.)
Corporate sponsorship budget is below the expected goal	Develop a "conservative" budget, and "standard" budget with various sponsorship and registration amounts. Start with the items the SLS absolutely must have, cut down on the rest (get cheaper meal options, minimal snacks, few "giveaways"). Reach out to the vendors to see about amending the contracts, if possible.
Corporate sponsorship budget is above the expected goal	Consider providing additional comfort for attendees. Some examples include provide 1 student per room instead of 2 per room, upgrade catering menu, purchase special thank-you presents for higher-tier sponsors and purchase special gifts to commemorate the event.
Expected number of registrations is not consistent with assumptions	Seek vendor contracts that provide flexibility to adapt the scope (e.g., adjust meals, hotel rooms, etc.) Sign contracts with the absolutely lowest numbers committed. Set up an early-bird fee to encourage early registration and reduce uncertainty in attendance Reach out to all schools periodically and ask for an expected headcount.
Another large event is occurring close to the SLS venue	Proactively monitor event schedules in your city and university and adjust plans as needed, informing all attendees of any potential inconveniences (e.g., additional traffic, restricted parking, road closures, etc.).

RECOMMENDED SCHEDULE MILESTONES

Each conference is unique and will have its own planning schedule. However, based on experience with previous editions of the SLS, a few milestones are proposed to serve as a progress checkpoint. Students are encouraged to adjust these to their own conference and reach out to District officers to provide frequent progress updates and discuss any issues that may lead to schedule deviations:

Milestone	Suggested due date (prior to conference kick-off)
Appoint SLS Chair/Vice-Chair and key leadership roles	9 months
Define event date and reserve venue location	6 months
Reserve a hotel room block	6 months
Invite keynote speaker(s)	5 months
Reach out to potential corporate sponsors	5 months
Reach out to other schools so they can work on travel plans and budget	5 months
Prepare and send "Save the Date"	4 months
Prepare a draft a budget	4 months
Finalized conference planning team	4 months
Invite conference speakers, beyond the keynote speakers, and out-of-town guests	4 months
Start negotiation with vendors (catering, transportation, audio/video, swags, etc.)	4 months
Assess conference budget and adjust expenses	2 months
Define registration fees	2 months
Open registration	2 months
Reach out to other schools for headcount estimates	2 months

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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