

Dancer Relations

Objectives:

- **Establish, publish and enforce all rules and policies for Dance Marathon**
 - **Oversee dancer registration, tours, bathroom breaks**
 - **Provide instruction to the EMTs, Operations/ Facilities and security teams during the marathon**
- The Dance Marathon Vision
- It is important that you become a resource on everything related to Dance Marathon. You will consult committee members, student organizations, campus administrators and businesses. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the duties and responsibilities of every committee.
 - You are a spokesperson for DM. Discuss and represent the views of Dance Marathon throughout the campus and community.
 - Make sure that you understand all rules/ guidelines set up by your school, the hospital, and even your community. These will guide you and your members need to understand the importance of following these guidelines.
 - The responsibilities of a director are endless and limitless- you must learn to delegate. Many committees will work together to accomplish their responsibilities. Make sure your committee set-up is comprehensive and that one chair is ultimately responsible for each task.
- Committee Creation
- Chairs responsibilities can be time consuming. The majority of former Dance Marathon council members say the most important task they accomplished was selecting a strong council. After you relay the Marathon vision, the committee members carry this vision to reality.
 - Involve as many people as possible, but make sure to assemble a committee that is dependable and energetic. Search to find individuals that are hard working and able to commit a large amount of time to fundraising for the kids!
 - When faced with a great task, many of us find the urge to turn to our close friends. If you feel that urge when it comes to selecting your Dance Marathon council, try to resist it. The committee should be a diverse group that has the drive and determination to make Dance Marathon a hit. Use objectivity in your selection process. Just because someone is a close friend doesn't mean they are a good selection.
 - Encourage students of all levels to apply.
- Run Committee Meetings
- Once the committee is selected, it is time to bring everyone together. This is a good time to get chairs comfortable with each other. Define expected actions and have them set goals.

- Make the first meeting fun. Conduct some ice breakers and team building games. These activities can immediately make you aware of committee members' personalities and how best to work with them throughout the year. Make the meetings motivational with members leaving feeling empowered to help the kids at Riley.
- Teach the chairs everything about Dance Marathon. Every member must know all marathon information inside and out.
- Be the critical eye and ear for your committee. Often chairs have great ideas, but they also have the tendency to get carried away. It is your responsibility to provide members with a reality check and help them design back-up plans.
- Keep the students on track. Everyone has great stories to tell about the weekend, etc, but you are there for a purpose.
- As you move throughout the year, you will be able to gauge how often meetings should be held. Some committees hold weekly meetings, some don't. This is up to you, however as it gets closer to the marathon (no less than three months away) each committee should hold weekly meetings.
- Set your meeting day, time and place in stone. Attendance should be mandatory and it is helpful to send out a reminder one week in advance.
- Be sure to construct a committee timeline and see that the president receives a copy as well as your committee.

➤ The Dancer Relations Committee

- One look at the objectives will tell you Dancer Relations have many responsibilities. The best suggestion is to recruit a dependable committee early and delegate responsibilities. Your committee will get the message out to the dancers and others so you will probably want students who are articulate.
- Delegate according to your best judgment. Some schools have dished out responsibilities by putting one committee member over EMTs or writing the dancer handbook, etc. However you delegate, emphasize the need for you committee to come through with their assignments the best they can.

➤ Establish, Publish and Enforce All Rules and Policies for DM

- Some people hear the word "rules" and immediately get defensive. However, DM rules are necessary to keep order during the marathon and fairness throughout the planning process. Included in this section is a copy of the dancer guidebook from Indiana University. It contains everything a dancer needs to know about DM: what to wear, bring, eat, etc. There are also deadlines and ways to raise money and a reminder why you are doing DM!
- DM rules tend to be pretty similar from school to school with a few exceptions. Most notable are the dancer fundraising minimum and whether or not dancers can sit during the marathon. Whichever rules you chose to create, make sure they cover all areas of DM at your school and are ones that you can enforce! Set rules as early as possible. The earlier you set rules, the easier it will be for your committee to explain.
- Rules are not only things you can't do, but things you can do! If you hold a karaoke contest, how does a group or individual get involved? Are there prizes?

Who will judge the acts? These are all things that can be included in the dancer handbook.

- Dedicate an entire meeting to rules. Come to the meeting prepared with preliminary rules for every part of DM and get feedback from committee members. What works and what does not? Is there a university policy you have overlooked that your campus advisor knows about? Everyone on council also needs to understand the rules so that they can explain or defend them if needed.

➤ When Brainstorming DM Rules and Policies, consider the following:

- Who can register for DM?
- Establish fundraising methods and deadlines, including pledges, mail and canister solicitations
- When will organizations be permitted to begin raising funds?
- What is the minimum total needed before a dancer can register? Some schools have at least \$10 per hour. Some schools require a flat fee in pledges or donations.
- Who will provide canisters (etc.) to the participating groups? Have labels printed for the canisters and designate a distribution point (usually the office)
- Think about incorporating a signed ethics policy that the money raised for the marathon will go to Riley Hospital.
- What happens if a dancer is ill the week of the marathon?
- Are registered dancers allowed to find substitutes? How does this procedure work?
- Are dancers permitted to sit if they are not feeling well? Where will you take them?
- What rules are in place for people who sit down?
- If organizations violate any of the rules or regulations prior to the marathon, what are the consequences? (Handle violations discreetly and professionally).
- What is the course of action if alcohol is brought into the marathon?

➤ Dancer Registration Form

- Developing a dancer registration form is quite easy. The reason for the form is communication and control; you will need the dancers' contact information for communicating information and dates and in case of an emergency. Before creating a dancer registration form we suggest having a few things decided such as:
 - Will there be a dancer registration fee in addition to funds raised and if so, how much? (Many schools have these fees to cover a meal, the t-shirts and other minor expenses)
 - What is the final date to register?
 - When is money due?
- Information to include on the dancer registration form:
 - Whether or not a dancer has paid his or her registration fee
 - How much they have raised
 - What organization they represent

➤ The Handbook and Other Printing Needs

- The handbook is the guide to DM policies and procedures. Once rules, contests, deadlines and everything else about DM that needs to be on paper is, assemble the handbook. This can be assembled in different forms:
 - Bound booklet
 - Manila envelope of forms and information
 - Stapled together
- Work with the marketing committee to find a printing sponsor. In addition to the handbook, you will need to make copies of items such as: dancer registration packets, medical record sheets, contest applications, and EMT registration sheets. A sample medical record sheet is included in this section. Print enough materials for every dancer, registered organization and committee member.

➤ The Final Word

- While you cover creation of rules, if a rule is challenged, the judgment rests with you, the president and the campus advisor.

➤ Dancer Informational Meetings

- This meeting is a chance for everyone to get the details of Dance Marathon. Everyone on council and on your committee should attend this meeting to show support for DM. People will not just show up to a meeting like this. They have to be enticed. Present DM at the meetings of all campus organization you want to involve. If you want people to come, you have to communicate with every member of the group. For instance, if you want to involve the Greek system, don't just go to an IFC or Panhellenic officers meeting and make a presentation. Go to every chapter! Talk to members of the organization and everyone you know. Tell them about the date and the time. Flood the campus with information. Talk it up!
- Work with university staff to plan the dancer information meeting. Chose a room for this meeting that has adequate space for the number of people you expect at the meeting. Check to see that the room and audio- visual equipment are reserved and arrangements have been made for any food (optional) you want at the meeting. Have completed, printed handbooks, dancer registration forms and donation forms ready to hand out.
- An agenda for the informational meeting could look something like this:
 - Welcome and energy builder
 - Director introductions
 - Show a video from last years marathon, and / or a Riley video
 - Morale shows attendees the line dance (or a portion of)
 - Outline rules, procedures and deadlines
 - Invite Dance Marathon Coordinator or Riley Development Director to close out the meeting with an inspirational story

- Once the meeting is over and you have explained the non- stop fun that is Dance Marathon, it is time for people to register. One important think to remember is to have options if someone does not or cannot register immediately after the event. Can they register during office hours in the student activities office? Will they be able to register on- line?
- Once a student is registered, give them a copy of the rule book, and assign them a dancer number. Dancer names and contact information must be entered into a database and used to identify everything about that individual; medical information, organizations they represent, total amount raised, etc. This is a good way to keep track of dancers. Remind them that during the marathon they need to wear their number at all times.
- Inform dancers that they must submit all medication they need during the marathon to EMTs before the marathon begins. Many schools have found this easy to do when the dancer checks in just before the marathon begins. Create a simple system for dropping off medication that works for you.

➤ Dancer Information Needed

- Make sure to include the following information on your dancer registration sheets: dancer #, name, local and permanent address, phone #, email, major, favorite snacks, song requests, etc.

➤ Emergency Medical Technicians

- Assign one person to work with the EMTs. EMTs are needed to collect medication from dancers when they check in for the marathon, distribute the collected medication in proper dosages and at appropriate times to dancers during the marathon, survey the dancers for any potential problems, decide if a dancer needs a break and attend to any health problems dancers may experience.
- The EMTs are the dancers' resource for health questions and concerns. They are also a good resource for you to consult before drafting the DM rules.
- EMTs are not permitted to give dancers any medication that was not submitted to them before the marathon. Any medicine dancers may need during the marathon must be given to EMTs before the event begins.
- In addition to licensed EMTs, Dance Marathon EMTs can be doctors or nurses from a hospital, athletic trainers or paramedics.
- Below is an example EMT needs list. Consult with your EMTs as to what they will need.
 - 3 tables
 - Petroleum jelly
 - Water cooler, cups, ice
 - Tongue depressors
 - Baby powder
 - Baby lotion
 - Rubbing alcohol
 - Pepto Bismol

- Ace Bandages
- Towels
- Tissues
- Band Aids
- Ear plugs
- Eye drops
- Cots
- Toothpaste/ brush

➤ Security and Mass Members

- Work with Operations/ Facilities to decide who will captain and choose the security team(s). The purpose of a security team is to keep unauthorized people off the dance floor and to ensure the safety of all participants. Mass members can be separated into teams of 8 or 10 individuals to take shifts throughout the marathon. Security teams do not take the place of the police or university security. Work with these organizations to determine the role of your security teams.
- Meet early on with the university police department. Is security a big issue on campus? How should you protect the money received during the marathon? Will the police help at the marathon? If so, how?
- Many Dance Marathons find that when the bars close, there will be an influx of visitors soon thereafter. Develop a plan to deal with these “special” spectators from 1 to 4 am.

➤ Between Registration and the Event

- This is a critical time. Communication during this time with students who have signed up to be dancers can mean the difference between them attending or not attending the Marathon. You can send them reminders such as some activities to look forward to at Dance Marathon, safety and comfort tips to keep in mind, ideas for psychological preparation (sleeping, eating, clothing, etc.) fund raising ideas, Riley stories, or a reminder to turn in a completed information sheet if they have not already. If Morale captains are in place they can and should be used as communication avenues for this information. Some schools even have these groups meet once or twice a month to communicate new information and motivate each other.

➤ Before the Marathon Begins

- Prepare for dancers to arrive at the marathon. Questions to answer are: When and where will dancers check in? How will you take attendance? How will you distribute t-shirts and anything else you want to distribute to the dancers?
- For example, at the University of South Carolina dancers were given a card with their dancer number on it as they checked in before the event. They then went to the next station and turned in any medicine they needed and got a green check on their card. Next they went to a station that collected their money where they got a red check on their card. Then came the station that distributed t-shirts where they received a black check mark and on and on. If they went to the t-shirt station

without a green or red check on the card, the dancer was sent back to that station. It was very efficient.

- At Indiana University, dancers are separated alphabetically by organization and asked to come in 15 minute intervals to decrease congestion
- Another question is “what will we do with the dancers once they have checked in?” Some schools bring them to a place away from the marathon floor and let them relax, then bring morale in 15 or 20 minutes before the start to pump them up. Other suggestions are to provide a chance to meet and be thanked personally by Riley Families.

➤ Dancers at the Marathon

- It is easier to identify dancers if they have and wear their dancer number. For this reason, some schools have dancers wear their dancer numbers on a piece of paper pinned to their back during the entire weekend. These can be paper numbers that track teams wear to identify competitors during track meets, or anything similar. Make sure they are sturdy.
- Before dancers arrive at the marathon, have their t-shirts and number ready. Ask them to pin the numbers on their backs and remind them to re-pin the numbers if they change shirts.
- If you incorporate a spirit competition, consider awarding point for the following: student organizations that have members on DM committees, participation in competitions, winning a competition, members of organizations who have attended the marathon, etc. A spirit competition requires a lot of preparation and organization. Consider this carefully because the Dancer Relations committee is ultimately responsible for the competition.
- Another competition that has been very popular is the banner competition. This is where participating organizations decorate a banner the size of a bed sheet (and the banner quite often is a bed sheet) with a design of their choice incorporating certain required elements relating to Dance Marathon.

*** Helpful Hints:

- Get the information to the students!
- Start recruiting early- it’s never too soon!
- Make you deadlines well known (registration and donations)
- Do EMT’s have all of the necessary supplies??

*** Remember:

- Always have a back-up plan!
- Delegate! Do not allow yourself to become overwhelmed.
- Act as a DM role model. You represent DM whether you are meeting with a potential sponsor, briefing campus administrators, or sitting in a class. Encourage all committee members to remember they are also role models; everything they do reflect on DM. Have fun but remember to never jeopardize the perception of your organization.

Do it for the kids

Here is a brief explanation of each area:

Liaisons: There are three people who act as liaisons for the marathon. There is a Greek liaison, a Residence Hall liaison and an independent liaison. These people keep in touch with the dancer group representatives and keep them motivated and informed of all the events prior to and at the marathon.

Medical Supplies: These people are in charge of taking an inventory of the medical supplies and restocking for the next marathon. They are in charge of getting EMTs to monitor the marathon, and they make sure that everyone gets their medicine on time at the marathon. They keep all medical forms on file and keep exact record of medicine taken by the dancers.

Registration: These chair people are in charge of getting all of the dancers registered and put into the database. They also run check in at the marathon. They split the work up in three ways: fraternities, sororities, and residence halls/ off campus.

Spirit Points/ Guidebook: These people are in charge of making the dancer guidebook that is handed out at the dancer orientation meetings. The guidebook is basically the instruction manual for the marathon. Spirit points are tallied up all year by these chairs. Spirit points give the dancer groups some incentive for canning, advertising, and being at meetings on time. There are awards given at the end of the marathon for the most spirit points. The chairs decide how to tally the points and keep specific log of the number of people that visit a dancer from each organization.

As the director of this committee, my job is to make sure that everyone is getting their assigned tasks completed. I constantly am recruiting new groups and dancers and trying to make sure we have all of the people involved that have been involved in the past. I help the chairs in anyway that I can, because there is a lot of work that takes place in the last few months until the marathon.

During the spring semester liaisons keep DGRs informed of special events and get their home addresses for summer contacts. The groups pick their pairs for the marathon. We also write a letter to hospitals asking for medical supplies. Before we leave for the summer, the dancer guidebook is completed and the database for registration is completed.

In the fall mass dancer callout meetings are held the second week of classes. The dancers registered and begin their fundraising right away. We give them the guidebook and let them meet the executive council.

Mass Dancer Orientation Meetings: We hold two of these to get the dancers ready for the marathon. A representative from the hospital can attend for motivational speaking, and the dancers prepare for what to expect at the marathon. Dancers can be registered at these meetings also.

DGR Meetings: We hold two meetings with the DGRs, one the week before the marathon and one the week of. These are basically just so that we can touch base with general information and keep them motivated for fundraising and reaching their goals.

We also have mass members, and hold two meetings before the marathon. They help us monitor the bathrooms at the marathon, and make all of the wristbands for the dancers.

The medical supplies committee gets the medical supplies and cots from the Red Cross, while constantly filing medical forms for the dancers.

Registration is constantly entering new people into the database and Spirit Points keeps a running total of the group's participation.

Helpful Hints:

Get the information out! The number of dancers falls directly on you—the more you advertise, the more people will know who you are.

Don't be afraid to contact new organizations and catch their interest. You never know who you can get until you try. You would be surprised how many college students love to help children. Stay organized with registration, so that the dancers are accounted for.

Try to get a good mix of people for your marathon and as you chairs. These people are going to be selling your marathon as much as council does, so make sure they are dependable.

How do we recruit dancers?

Promotions and Dancer Relations work closely on this because it is all about making sure everyone has a chance to know about Dance Marathon. We put flyers out and chalk the sidewalks constantly before the callout meetings. We contact previous dancers by email, and organization presidents by email. We go into the dorms and recruit freshmen because they are willing to start off college with a contribution to the campus. We blitz at registration and make dinner announcements, and chapter announcements. We allow people to register at the union, the residence halls and anywhere on campus we feel works well. One new thing that is being added this year is the involvement of the families. We are trying to have families come to organization meetings and talk about Riley Hospital and what a great opportunity Dance Marathon is.

Consider the following:

Who can register for Dance Marathon? Will you only allow registered student organizations on campus to enter?

Establish fundraising methods and deadlines; including mail, canister and letter solicitations. When will organizations be permitted to begin raising funds? Are fundraising timelines set? Will there be a minimum pledge total needed before a dancer may register?

Who will provide canisters and posters to the participating groups? Designate a distribution point.

Think about incorporating an ethics policy that the money raised during canning goes to hospitalized children- not gas, beer, food or lodging.

What happens if a dancer is ill the week of Dance Marathon? Are dancers allowed to find substitutes? How does the procedure work?

Are dancers permitted to sit during the event? If so, for what duration? If not, what rules are in place for not leaning on objects, touching the floor with hands or knees, dancing without leaning on other individuals, etc.?

Are dancers who experience extreme pain allowed to receive medical attention during the event?
How long are they permitted to be off the floor before they are disqualified?
If dancers violate rules during marathon, what is the result?

Dancer Numbers: It is easier to identify dancers if they are wearing their Marathon number. For this reason, dancer numbers on a piece of paper which is pinned to their back during the entire weekend. Penn State uses the same paper that track teams wear to identify competitors during track meets.

Arrival of Dancers:

Before dancers arrive, have their t-shirts, plastic number, and colored wristband ready. Ask them to pin the numbers on their backs throughout Dance Marathon. Remind dancers to re-pin the numbers if they change shirts. Place it around their wrist- the band should not be removed until the Marathon is over!

Spirit Competition:

The Lip Sync Competition could replace the Spirit Competition. It provides students with a way to express their "spirit" but it is not as complicated as a Spirit Competition. If you incorporate a Spirit Competition, consider awarding points for the following: student organizations that have members of Dance Marathon committees, student organizations that sponsor dancers, for participating in the Lip Sync Competition, winning the Lip Sync Competition, members of organizations who attend Dance Marathon. A Spirit Competition requires a lot of preparation and organization. Consider this carefully because the Dancer Relations Committee is ultimately responsible for the competition.