



Alpha Rho Chi

National Professional Fraternity
Architecture and the Allied Arts



HOW TO

Host a Professional Lecture

by Jonathan Fair, Seshait Alumnus

HOW TO: Host a Professional Lecture

When planning a professional lecture, your chapter is in line for a potentially challenging, but rewarding experience. Depending upon the resources you utilize and the keynote speaker of the lecture, hosting a professional lecture can be relatively easy to do.

In the Fall of 2010, the Seshait chapter hosted the second portion of its professional lecture series. After inviting Philip Freelon (FAIA, LEED AP, and President of the Freelon Group) in the Spring of 2009, the chapter invited our Master Architect, Brother Robert Ivy. Robert Ivy, FAIA and Editor in Chief of the Architectural Record spent the day at the University's School of Architecture, touring studio spaces, meeting for discussions with students and faculty, and finally giving his lecture on present trends in architecture around the world.

With early planning, good use of resources, and the full cooperation of the chapter, we were able to host a smooth event and make connection with prominent professionals in our field. By following these basic steps, your chapter can be on track to similar success.



Brothers of the Seshait Chapter, Dean Rodner Wright, and Bro. Robert Ivy

1. Meet with your chapter to determine a desired keynote speaker:

Selecting an appropriate speaker to deliver a lecture can determine the next course of action you will need to take. Professionals with higher profiles will generally require more effort and potentially monetary costs, while local professionals are more willing to accept on lighter terms. When deciding on a professional to deliver a lecture, consider what topics of discussion the student body or chapter could benefit from, and what type of projects your speaker typically deals with. A speaker with a work history that appeals to students and faculty will draw a larger audience and create a more attractive event.

2. Make your request and utilize your resources to obtain your speaker

In order to request any professional to conduct a lecture, a formal letter requesting their participation should be submitted to them. However, depending upon the proposed speaker, you should make faculty and staff aware of your selection in order to garnish any support or pre-existing connections that they may have already with the speaker. For example, when requesting Bro. Ivy for the Fall 2010 lecture, the Seshait chapter made our school's dean aware of our attempt to have Bro. Ivy give a lecture. Because of this, we discovered that our dean was actually a college classmate and friend of Bro. Ivy. In effect, facilitating and communicating with Bro. Ivy became quite easier. Also, we gained the support of faculty and staff for the event.

Some speakers will request monetary reimbursement for their time, so in order to lighten (and possibly alleviate) the fiscal burden on your chapter, be sure to contact available resources that are willing to donate money to aid academic efforts and events. Often, universities will designate funds specifically for academic events such as lectures. These funds generally remain unused and universities tend to be happy to allow active student organizations, interested in hosting academic related events to utilize them. In addition to university funding sources, The Alpha Rho Chi Foundation also financially supports academic and professional related events. In fact, for expenses related to facilitating a speaker or holding an event that can benefit the fraternity professionally or academically, the Alpha Rho Chi Foundation will match a chapter's financial contribution 1:1.

3. Planning the Actual Event and Executing Your Objectives

Now that your speaker has agreed to give a lecture at your university, further planning must be done to accommodate the speaker while he is at your university. The first item of that planning must involve your speaker's transportation to and from the place of his/her presentation. If there are any major travel related costs, those should be discussed in the terms of your contract/agreement with your speaker. Nonetheless, arrangements should be

made to ensure that your guest speaker arrives in a timely manner that allows him/her to comfortably present.

Depending upon the terms of your agreement, your guest speaker may spend the majority of the day at your university. If that is the case, this gives you the opportunity to plan and have a whole day of events leading up to the lecture. With this time, your speaker can visit design studios, have small group discussions with students, and possibly have lunch with faculty members. Any event or effort to enrich the quality of the speaker's visit and widen the student and faculty body of knowledge are great for the time prior to the actual lecture.

Before the presentation, make sure that your speaker has all the tools he/she will need to deliver their lecture effectively. Whether it is a projector for PowerPoint presentation, paper for drawings, microphones for a larger space, or bottled water, make sure you ask for all the things your speaker will need ahead of time, so that you can have them on hand and ready.

For the actual presentation, make sure that you have assigned a Master of Ceremony (M.C.) to welcome your audience, introduce your speaker, and transition into a closing once the lecture is finished. If at all possible, a small reception with light refreshments is a pleasant method to conclude the day's events. Aside from providing food for your guests, a reception will also allow a few more moments for small conversation and possibly photographs with your speaker. Also, a parting gift (plaque/certificate) is a thoughtful way to show your appreciation for your speaker's time and can leave a positive, lasting impression.



Bro. Jonathan Fair serves as the event M.C. and introduces Bro. Robert Ivy

Once the day's events have concluded, be sure to ensure that your speaker's transportation from the lecture is accommodated for in a punctual manner. Don't be the reason why your guest speaker missed their flight home.

4. Expect the Unexpected

Despite all the provisions and planning you may make, the unexpected will occur. Delayed flights, overbooked hotels, and malfunctioning equipment are all too common occurrences that occur at the most unexpected times. However, in order to expeditiously and if necessary, creatively surpass these issues, you must make sure that you are a completely dedicated team (i.e. your chapter) ready to address each unexpected situation as they come. In short, to successfully hold a professional lecture, your chapter must be sure to treat your speaker as the guest he/she is. With proper planning and the will to accommodate your speaker as needed, your lecture is bound to be a success.

If you have any questions, concerns, or need assistance with planning your own professional lecture, feel free to contact Jonathan Fair of the Seshait chapter at seshaitupsilon7@yahoo.com.



Brothers of the Seshait chapter prepare to present parting gift for Bro. Ivy