

To: Student Organizations Advisors
From Fellow Advisors: Suzan Akin, Ronnie Rios, Judy McHugh
Re: Date/Service Auction

We have had the opportunity to gather many opinions on date/service auctions. Opinions have come from students, other campuses, and advisors. Based upon the data gathered and shared we recommend the following guideline be used by Northwestern Student Organization Advisors as a tool to help student organizations learn to organize, implement and succeed. As advisors, our own opinions should not dictate our recommendations but should be shared as opinion.

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW RELATIVE TO DATE/SERVICE AUCTIONS

Advisors should discuss the following concerns with student organizations planning a date or service auction:

1. Perception of the event

Questions to ask:

- What may be some perceptions regarding date/service auctions?
- What may be some repercussions of these perceptions?
- What is a good way to work past these perceptions throughout the actual auction? (ie. Group packages)

Recommendations:

- Be prepared for different perceptions of the event by the Northwestern community and the student group membership
- Presentation of dates and services
 - Expectations of all participants
 - Encouragement of group packages

2. Recruitment and volunteer preparation

Questions to ask:

- How should/will the student organization get participants to volunteer?
- What considerations should be taken of and for volunteers?
- Why/should participants be asked for ID?

Recommendations:

- Recruitment
 - Voluntary
 - Open to all students
 - ID /age verification (18+)
- Volunteers
 - Exchange of personal information (student organization should be the source)
 - Understanding that they can back out at any point if they're uncomfortable
 - Sensitivity to misgivings by volunteers
 - Right of refusal of any participant

3. Procedures for bidders

Questions to ask:

- Why/should bidders be asked to present ID?
- Is it important to have off campus events exclusive to NU? Why or why not?
- Would it be beneficial to set a minimum bid for each date/service?
- Would it be helpful to have a staff member present at the auction?

Recommendations:

- Bidders
 - Wildcard and other form of ID
 - Focus on participation of undergraduates encouraged
 - Minimum set bid (by student organization or advisor?)

- Off Campus Events
 - Open exclusively to Northwestern, Bar Night contract must be completed
 - Staff presence recommended

DATING AUCTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Be wary of the negative perceptions that date auctions have. One perception is that they resemble slavery. The ramifications of this perception is pretty self-explanatory. Another perception of date auctions are that they are popularity contests, only showcasing the "prettiest" or "coolest" so you do run the chance of alienating some members.
- 2) Remember that personal safety and sensitivity come first. In terms of personal safety, no one should be made to feel uncomfortable in the slightest way or be put in any compromising position that would create tension or stress. And in terms of personal sensitivity, keep in mind that there may be students who don't get significant bids and this may be hurtful to them.
- 3) You should do your best to have selection criteria for the dates or services and communicate the criteria to potential dates/ service providers. It is up to you to determine this criteria as long as it takes into consideration the recommendations outlined in this email. However, the main point to emphasize is that participation is strictly voluntary. Nobody should be forced or required to provide a date or service. Doing so would constitute hazing, which is against NU policies.
- 4) To increase the safety of bidders and dates/service providers alike, all participants should be at least 18 years old and must have undergraduate status at NU. To ensure this, please check both WildCards and ID's at the door of the event. If you allow just anyone to bid, you run the risk of a 50-year-old person from Chicago who no one knows to bid on a 17-year-old first-year student.
- 5) You should also encourage group packages whenever you can. For dates, you can offer group dates of two or more students. And for services, you can offer services that are provided by two or more students. These usually raise the greatest amounts for student groups because higher bids are more reasonable for a group.
- 6) You should set minimum bids to equalize bidding ranges so no one gets their feelings hurt in the process.
- 7) Clearly state the expectations of dates/service providers and bidders. All participants should know that final bids are not binding. Dates/service providers have the right to refuse a bid.
- 8) Usually the dates/service providers know the people who are bidding on them, i.e. they are friends with them, however this is not always the case. If, at any time, a date/service provider does not feel comfortable with the student who won the bid, s/he has the right to refuse going on the date or providing the service. If this is the case, then the bidding student has the option of a refund or donating the money.